THE MALABAR CHURCH
AND
OTHER ORTHODOX CHURCHES.

By

REV. FR. I. DANIEL, D. D., F. Ph. S.,

EVERATHU KIZHAKATHIL, CHEPPAD P. O.

Travancore, S. India.

The sale proceeds of this edition of the book will be utilised for the reconstruction of the impaired ancient Orthodox Syrian Church of Cheppad, the photo of which is given on page facing 52.

Price 10 Shs.



His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Ghevarghese II
Catholicos of the East & Metropolitan of Malabar.

This Book is Dedicated

in loving and sacred memory of

H. G. CHEPPAD Mar DIONYSIUS

METROPOLITAN OF MALANKARA

Who entered eternal & blessed rest

on 12th October 1855

and buried in the ancient Church, Cheppad.

The following are some of the appreciations received for my Book, THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR.

His Grace The Most Rev. Mar Thoma Dionysius Metropolitan of the See of Niranam:-

"I have great pleasure to recommend to the members of the church the book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' of which Rev. Fr. I. Daniel of Cheppad is the author. I know the author and I love his work both as a priest and as the writer of such books as Church history etc. No doubt this book will give the readers a clear conception of the facts of the history of the Church in South India in a handy form. I give him my blessings."

His Grace Abuna Mar Theophilos, Bishop of Harar, Ethiopia:-

"…. I read with great interest your book and I find that this work 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' is an outstanding historical contribution and full of enlightenment to its readers. It proves that the author has left no stone unturned to acquaint his readers with a full knowledge of the back grounds and evolutions of the Syrian Church of Malabar. …."

Secretary to H. G. The Arch Bishop of Canterbury:-

"The Arch Bishop has asked me to thank you for your book on the Syrian Church of Malabar.

The Arch Bishop has very kindly suggested that this book should be kept with the other books of our Library here for reference of this Council. The Arch Bishop has pleasure in sending his blessings."

Rt. Rev. Bishop Dr. W. D. Terry M. A., D. D., Transvaal, South Africa:-

"Recently Fr. I. Daniel's 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' came into my hands and I wish to record with what deep interest I read this valuable work. Until the opportunity was afforded me of reading it, the history and traditions of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar had remained very obscure indeed as far as I was concerned, and I am sure the same applied to most other students of Church history living outside India. By his industry Dr. Daniel has corrected that. His book has I know, penetrated far beyond his own country and has carried with it the good repute of that ancient and honourable body to which he belongs. In return it has earned the affectionate greetings and the respect of the author's fellow Christians in many lands, who salute in him a famous Church. How this Church has preserved its integrity down the ages makes a fine story, which Dr. Daniel has delighted to tell. I look forward to the appearance of a second edition and if this unsolicited appreciation of the first edition is able to earn some publicity for the second, I shall be very glad."

Private Secretary to H. I. M. The Emperor of Abyssinia:-

" I am commanded by His Imperial Majesty to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of 20th. Sept. '48 together with your book entitled 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' The book is indeed very interesting and gives full description of the establishment of the Christian faith in India by the Apostle Thomas during the course of the first century. It is His Imperial Majesty's earnest hope that the ancient Church of India will attain the desired result in its efforts for the expansion of its evangelical activities."

Private Secretary to H. M. The King of England:-

" I am commanded by the King to thank you sincerely for the copy of your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' which through Prebendary W. E. S. Holland, you have kindly submitted for His Majesty's acceptance."

The Director of H. M. The King's Civil Cabinet & Personal Secretary to H. M. The King of Greece:-

"His Majesty the king has directed me to acknowledge receipt of your interesting book, 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' and to convey to you his heart-felt thanks for your kindness. Herewith en-closed please find a photograph of Their Majesties the King and Queen which they have graciously autographed for you. ...."

Private Secretary to H. M. The King of Norway:-

".... I am commanded to convey to you His Majesty's thanks for the copy of your book, The Syrian Church of Malabar."

Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen of Holland:-

" Her Majesty the Queen of Netherlands charges me to transmit to you her sincerest thanks for sending a copy of your interesting book, The Syrian Church of Malabar."

H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece:-

"I am writing to say how much I appreciated your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' I have learnt very much from it which I did not know and I think that every one who is interested in the very ancient and venerable Christian communities of Malabar, should make a point of reading it. I congratulate you on having taken the trouble to write and publish it. You have not only rendered a great service to your own particular confession, but also to the whole of Christendom and to the world of scholars. My very best wishes for its continued success."

His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham, Ethiopian Ambassador, New Delhi:-

".... I have read your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' through and find it very interesting as well as instructive. I had heard before coming to India that there was an ancient Christian community

in S. India and that they were of the Syrian Orthodox communion. But your book has revealed to me some facts which I did not know before, especially about the establishment of the church, of its many Bishops, of its struggle with Roman Catholic and Protestant Missionaries and of the number of its believers. Your book should be widely known and that I am glad that you are intending to reprint a second edition of it in America with more chapters on the teachings of the Syrian Church. I have no doubt that it will be an important step in introducing your ancient church to the whole Christian world and of arousing more interest in your community both in America and Europe."

Hon. Smt. RajaKumari Amritkaur, Health Minister, India Government:-

"........ I am grateful to you for your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' which I have read with much interest. It is a valuable contribution to those interested in the beginnings of Christianity in India. Personally I have always had a high regard for the Syrian Indian Christian community and I am glad to have increased my scant knowledge of their history through your book."

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, Ayot, England:-

".... I have received your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' and read it with interest. I hope your book will have a large circulation. ...."

His Excellency Sir Maharaj Singh, K. C. I. E., F. Ph. S., Governor of Bombay:-

"I have read your book. It is an interesting history of the Orthodox Syrian Church and it furnishes some what more documentary proof than other books on the same church. Yours is a well written and interesting publication. ...."

Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Nuffield, Oxford, England:-

"I have received your letter forwarded to me by Dr. Wynne Bennett, D. Sc., F. Ph. S., and I am writing to thank you for the generous thought which prompted your sending me a copy of the history of your church. I shall be reading it with interest at the first available opportunity."

Rt. Hon. Lord Dunsany, D. L., Litt. D., London:-

"....Your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' interests me very much as it contains a great many things about the history of christianity in India of which I did not know. ...."

Rev. Sorensen, M. P., House of Commons, London:-

"I thank you warmly for the gift of your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' I have always had a particular interest in the Syrian Church and I am grateful that you have furnished me with valuable further informations respecting it. ...."

Dr. H. D. Wynne Bennett, D. Sc., F. Ph. S., F. Ec. S., Dip. Th., London:-

"....I have read your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' with much interest and find it simpler and more concise than other books which I possess such as Mackenzie's book published in Travancore. As is only natural your facts are authentic and I have checked them with particulars given by other authorities ...."

Mr. H. C. Papworth, M. A., O. B. E., Vice-chancellor, Travancore University, Trivandrum:-

"Thank you very much indeed in sending me a copy of your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' It was most kind of you to do so and I have read it with exceedingly great interest. I learnt from it many historical facts which I did not know before. I wonder if you have seen the enclosed review of it which I cut out from the London Church Times."

Rev: S. A. B. Mercer, Ph. D., D. D., Dean of Divinity of Toronto University, Canada:-

".... It was a very gracious act on your part to send me a copy of your history of the Syrian Church of Malabar. I have read every word of it with keen interest and much profit. I have already shown it to several of my colleagues who have expressed much interest in it. ...."

Dr. M. K. Alexander M. A., Ph. D., Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Arkansas State College, U. S. A.:-

".... From my acquaintance with the subject matter I may say that the scholarly Father I. Daniel

has made a contribution of great historic value. The need for such a work has been felt in every part of the Western World where the amazing story of the Syrian Church of Malabar has been heard. It will be a real treat to the general reader and a handy reference volume to the scholar. ...."

Sir George Bog, I. C. S., K. C. I. E., Ex. Dewan of Cochin:-

"I write to acknowledge receipt of your book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' which I am very pleased to have. I shall read the book with great interest and keep it for reference in matters connected with the Syrian church. ...."

Mr. K. P. Padmanabhan Thampy B. A., Asst. Information Officer to the Govt. of Travancore:-

"I have enjoyed reading your well written book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar'. It is both interesting and informative. Verily it is an eye opener and no student of religion in the higher sense of the term should miss studying this important book which is the work of a scholar. I am very happy to have the book in my library. It is really a valuable addition to my collection."

Mr. P. Seshadri Iyer B. A., M. L., Ex. Superintendent, Travancore University Publications:-

"The copy of the book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' so kindly sent by you has reached me and I am intensely happy to receive it. The contents of the book are of absorbing interest. It gives all that is

essential and relevant in the history of the Syrian Church of Malabar. The style is also so simple and lucid befitting the dignity of the subject. For some time I have been studying the history of the church and it was a book of this nature that I wanted. ...."

Mr. C. T. Mathew, Pathanamthitta, Travancore:-

"I write to inform you that I had the opportunity of going through your publication 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' recently and I am much pleased in your work. Though a few other books have been published on the same subject by certain other authors yours stands foremost as it gives a clear, impartial and accurate history of events of the Church from the first century in an abridged form and not avoiding facts of truths. Please accept my hearty congratulations in your undertaking and I wish your book a wide publicity."

Mr. P. K. Charry, Bar-at-Law, Madras:-

"....I have read your scholarly book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' with the greatest interest and I have learnt a lot from it about the Syrian Church. I must congratulate you on having written such an excellent and useful book. ...."

Mr. P. A. Oomman B. A., M. L., Advocate, High Court, Ernakulam:-

"........This book gives a lucid and accurate narrative of the various incidents in the history of the church from the coming of St. Thomas the

Apostle. .... I may say without any hesitation that in writing such a book Rev. Fr. I. Daniel has done a signal service to the Christian World."

Appreciations by Papers.

The Guardian, London:-

"....Much has been heard of the proposals for union with South India United Church, but probably little is known in this country of a small but live Church of Eastern Christians which has existed in South India from the earliest times. This ancient church may well have peculiar qualifications for the evangelisation of India, since it is a church indigenous to the soil with an Indian temperament capable of understanding the particular difficulties involved. Within the compass of less than seventy pages Rev. Fr. I. Daniel, a priest of the Syrian Church of Malabar has composed a lucid and interesting history of this venerable church. All interested in re-union in India should read this book. ...."

The Church of England News Paper, London:-

"Rev. Fr. I. Daniel of Cheppad, Travancore has produced a very readable history of his church which should be read by all interested in the evangelisation of India. ...."

The Church Times, London:-

".... The book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' is a well documented history written by Rev. Fr. I. Daniel, a priest of the Syrian Church. ...."

The Modern Review, Calcutta:-

"....In the book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' the author Rev. Fr. I. Daniel has given in a condensed form the principal facts relating to the growth and development of Syrian Church from its foundation to the present day. An easy readable book of good typographical execution, it ought to be welcomed by all interested in the history of the Indian Church. Rev. Fr. I. Daniel deserves congratulations for this history of the Syrian Church so well presented. ...."

The Anglican Out look, Canada:-

".... Rev. Fr. I. Daniel offers us the opportunity of investigating the history of the Syrian Church in a compact and readable book. The Syrian Church has suffered considerably at the hands of ill-informed Anglicans whose interference with the Liturgical and other traditions of the Syrians in South India led to the creation of a schism, the so called 'Mar Thoma Church of Malabar' of which we have heard much in Canada. ...."

The Canadian Church man, Toronto, Canada:-

"....'The Syrian Church of Malabar' by Rev. Fr. I. Daniel is a scholarly and authoritative work. This

may well serve as a hand book for those who are following the problems of the Church in India. ...."

The Malankara Sabha Magazine, Kottayam, Travancore:-

"Students of ecclesiastical history and priests will find this history of the Syrian Church of Malabar by Rev. Fr. I. Daniel extremely useful and handy. We congratulate the author and would encourage him to continue in the field of church history. ...."

The Church Weekly, Kottayam:-

".... Rev. Fr. I. Daniel of Cheppad has made a laudable attempt to give in a condensed form the principal facts in the growth and development of the Syrian Church of Malabar. We recommend this book to our readers as a valuable synopsis of Syrian church history in Malabar. ...."

The Federated India, Madras:-

"....The Syrian Church traces its origin to St. Thomas one of the direct disciples of Jesus Christ. The author has given in his book, 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' the unbroken history of his church for these nineteen centuries. He is unbiassed and states facts plainly. His book is a very useful publication. ...."

The Ancient Christian Fellowship Review, Los Angeles, California, U. S. A.:-

"........ The majority of theological students attending our present day seminaries and divinity

schools are given to understand the act concerning the establishment of the ancient Christian Church in India by St. Thomas the apostle is purely a myth, or at best a pious opinion. While this opinion may be justified because of our western ignorance it is not the truth. The Rev. Fr. I. Daniel, D. D. makes this very clear in his book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' He is a very fine type of priest and scholar."

The Church Times of London dated 7th October 1949 has recorded the following:-

"The Rev. I. Daniel, D. D. of the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar, who has written a book on the history of his church, has been made F. Ph. S. by the Philosophical Society of England for a thesis on the Philosophy of Buddhism. He is the only Syrian Christian who holds this Fellowship."

His Excellency the Governor of Bombay has written thus:-

Government House,
Bombay; March 23, 1950.

My dear Fr. Daniel,

"I congratulate you heartily on your having been made a Fellow of the Philosophical Society of England. You have thoroughly deserved it by your knowledge and literary talents. ...."

Yours Sincerely,
Maha Raj Singh.

President of the Orthodox Christian Educational Society, U. S. A. has sent the following letter dated 28th Aug. 1949.

My dear Fr. Daniel,

"Many laudatory remarks regarding you and your zeal for the Orthodox faith impel us to congratulate you and we pray the Lord to bless you in your God-pleasing work."

K. Andronis.

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PREFACE.

It is gratifying to note that one of my previous books 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' has been appreciated by eminent personages and esteemed Papers at home and abroad. Since all the copies of the said book were sold off in so short a time I had prepared a bigger volume with also the teachings of the Syrian Church. But as the printing cost was found to be too high this book had to be cut short and thus published to meet the immediate demands of people in India and overseas.

This book comprises a summary of my book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' added with short histories of other Orthodox Churches. I am very grateful to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Theophilos of the Ethiopian Church, to H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece, to Rev. Fr. Marcus Daoud of the Coptic Church and to Rev. Fr. A. Edgarian of the Armenian Church for their kindness in giving me informations about their Churches. My thanks are also due to the several eminent personages and esteemed Papers for the kind appreciations on my book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar.' It is hoped that this small volume will pave the way to a clear understanding and mutual relationship of the Orthodox Churches.

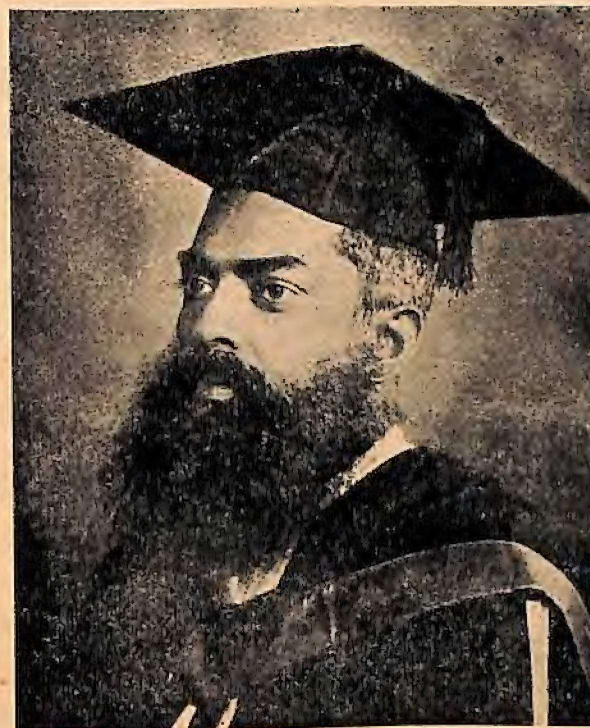
I intend to use the sale proceeds of this book and also any donations received for the reconstruction,

which is an immediate necessity, of the impaired ancient Cathedral Church of Cheppad. So the Public are requested to contribute their mites to the church reconstruction fund by encouraging the sale of this book.

In conclusion I may add a word of thanks to Mr. R. Sreedharan Pillai, Suvarna Bharathi Press Manager who took a keen interest in neatly and promptly executing his work of printing this volume to my entire satisfaction.

Rev. Fr. I. Daniel, D. D., F. Ph. S.
Vicar, Orthodox Syrian Church.

Cheppad, Travancore.
12th. Oct. 1950.



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Vicar, Orthodox Syrian Church, Cheppad, Travancore.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR.

The Syrian Church of Malabar traces its history back to the first century and claims St. Thomas one of the Apostles of our Lord, as its founder. St. Thomas came to Cranganore an important sea-port on the Malabar coast, in one of the trading ships in A. D. 52. He first preached the gospel to the Jews and then turned to the heathens. High caste Hindus became Christians. He established Churches at seven places *viz.* Maliankara (Cranganore), Palur (Chavakad), Parur, Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal, Kollum (Quilon) and appointed Prelates from four families – Pakalomatom, Sankarapuri, Kalli, Kaliyankal. Then he went over to the east coast and there also he founded a few Churches which are extinct now. It is believed that he even went to China and preached the gospel. When he returned he was put to death presumably in the year 72 A. D. at Mylapore near Madras and buried there. His remains were afterwards taken over to Edessa in Persia and were given a decent burial.

The Acts of St. Thomas.

The following account given in a book called the Acts of St. Thomas written by Bardesnes of Edessa in the beginning of the third century regarding the origin of the Indian Church is highly interesting. The regions of the world were divided among the apostles and by lot India fell to St. Thomas. But he hesitated to go. The Lord appeared to him and said, 'Fear not Thomas, go to India and proclaim the Word.' But he did not obey saying, 'where ever thou wishest to send me, send me elsewhere, to the Indians I am not going.' While speaking thus there came a man named Abbanes sent by king Gondophorus of India to fetch a carpenter.

Abbanes met our Lord and our Lord pointed to St. Thomas and sold him for three pounds of silver. They sailed for India and on the way the ship landed at Andrapolis, a royal city. There was a marriage feast in the city. The king's daughter was being given in marriage. During the marriage feast a servant struck St. Thomas and the apostle said that that hand would be dragged along by a dog and so it happened. That servant who was the cup-bearer went to draw some water from a fountain and then there came a lion, killed him and tore away his limbs. A black dog took the right hand in its mouth and brought it to the banquet hall. The flute girl who was a Hebrew had understood all the words of the apostle. She told the whole story to the people and they all believed in St. Thomas.

They then sailed and landed in the kingdom of Gondophorus in India. They came to the king. The king asked St. Thomas to build a palace for him to which he readily agreed. The king gave him money, gold and silver and what ever he asked. The apostle distributed them all freely among the poor and afflicted. One day the king came to the city and enquired of the people about the palace and he knew from them that Thomas went round and preached the gospel, healing the sick, leading a very simple life and they further told him that he spent what ever he got on the poor and the sick. The king got angry, sent for the merchant and Thomas and imprisoned them both, considering how to kill them. That very night his brother Gad fell ill and died. His soul was taken to heaven by the angels and was shown the beautiful places and dwellings there. When he came to the beautiful palace built by St. Thomas he begged the angels to permit him to dwell in one of its under-ground rooms. The angels said they could not do anything since it already belonged to his brother. Gad then told them to allow him to go back to his brother so that he might buy the palace from him as he did not know what it was like. The story goes that the soul came back to earth just before his body was buried and called for his brother. The brother was overwhelmed with joy. Gad then made an entreaty to him, "Assure me brother, that you will grant me what ever I ask." He agreed to give what ever he asked. Then he asked the king to sell to him the palace which St. Thomas had built in

heaven. The king was surprised to hear it and could not believe what he told him. Then he narrated the whole story to the king. St. Thomas and the merchant were both released from prison and the royal family embraced the new faith prea-ched by St. Thomas.

The apostle then left the kingdom of Gondo-phorus and visited the court of Misdeus, another Indian king. There the king's own wife and children were converted to Christianity. The king's resent-ment was so great that St. Thomas died a martyr's death. Such is the most ancient existing account of the life of St. Thomas. As a contribution to history it cannot be taken seriously and yet it is not without value. It speaks clearly that the scene of St. Thomas' labours was India. Till the middle of the 19th century Gondophorus was an unknown person and was thought to be a mere creation of the imagina-tion. But excavations made in the last century and the coins dug out bearing the name and figure of the king have conclusively proved that Gondophorus was a historical person of the first century. Till the last century no body would have believed that there was such a man as Gondophorus and that St. Thomas visited his court and therefore we can reasonably hope that many of the other facts conne-cted with the tradition will in due course be proved to be true. The kingdom of Gondophorus was Parthia and that extended over Baluchistan and Punjab and the banks of the Indus. It is quite likely therefore that St. Thomas left his kingdom and came

over to S. India to continue his christian work and probably Misdeus ruled over S. India at that time.

CHAPTER 2

THE SEVEN CHURCHES FOUNDED BY ST. THOMAS.

It is interesting to know about the seven churches founded by St. Thomas, the apostle. He first arrived by sea voyage with his friend Abbanes in the city of Cranganore. It was a great seaport at the time, being the chief centre of pepper and other trades for which ships were frequently coming via Persian gulf from several Asiatic ports of the west and it was the chief capital of the Chera Kings too. There was a Jewish settlement also at Cranganore. Soon after establishing a church at Maliankara near Cranganore where the people received him gladly, St Thomas turned his attention to Palur near which there was a port.

2. Palur was in the beginning of the first century of the christian era a famous Brahmin station inhabited by Nambudiri Brahmins and other high caste Hindus. One day St. Thomas visited the great tank of the Palur temple where the Brahmins were having their morning bath and performing their ceremonies by taking a handful of water and throwing it up muttering some prayers. Seeing this St. Thomas said that all such ceremonies were meaningless. The Nambudiris had a hot discussion

with the apostle about the new religion he preached in the course of which they one and all agreed to embrace his religion if he could perform a miracle. In the name of Trinity he took some water from the tank and threw it up in the air. To the surprise of the Nambudiris there was a depression on the surface of the water in the tank and the water thrown up was seen floating in the air above in big drops and falling down as flowers. The Namubdiris were wonder-struck by this miracle and most of them were instantly baptised at the hands of the apostle. A cross was put up there and the temple was converted into a church.

3. Parur (Kottakavu). It was during a festival day in the Kottakavu temple that the apostle reached Parur during his missionary tour. Many Hindus were present. The apostle preached about Christ there. The people were attracted to his speech. There he showed some miracle. The Nambudiris who were the owners of the temple believed in Christ and got baptised by the apostle. The temple was then converted into a church.

4. Gokamangalam is near the sea in the vicinity of Pallipuram. It is twenty miles south of Parur and 2½ miles west of Tannirmukam in Shertala Taluk. Tradition says that the cross the apostle put up there was pulled out and thrown in the sea by heathens and the waves carried it ashore. Thus it came to be fixed again.

5. Niranam. By the preaching of the apostle the Nambudiri Brahmins of this place got baptised at his hands and a church was established there. Just opposite to Niranam church was a Nambudiri family called 'Pattamuk.' The members of that family along with other Nambudiri families were converted into Christianity by the apostle. Some two hundred years ago a Pattamuk family member who was one of the great grand fathers of the author of this book came over and settled at Cheppad. Thus the author has been descended from Pattamuk family which St. Thomas converted.

6. Chayal (Nilakal) is situated in the south west of Ranni near Erumeli in Sabarimala hills. The church founded by the apostle has been destroyed in course of time and the people inhabited there went away due to troubles from wild beasts. Only the remains of the church can be seen there now in the thick of the forest.

7. Kollum (Quilon). The church founded by the apostle was near the sea coast and it was destroyed by the encroachment of sea. There is another church built near by. People say that some times a cross could be seen on a rock in the sea and it must have been the site of the original church.

Except Chayal all the places are on the coast or very close to it. From Palur in the north to Quilon in the south the distance is 130 miles.

CHAPTER 3

EVIDENCES TO SHOW THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN CHURCH.

St. Thomas mount near Madras is supposed to be the place of St. Thomas' death. Another sacred spot connected with St. Thomas is his tomb at Mylapore where the body of the apostle is buried. Over the tomb is a cathedral and of its treasures the most precious is the reliquary in which are preserved fragments of the bones of the apostle and the tip of the lance that pierced him. These places have now become regular places of pilgrimage. There is a place still shown as one in which St. Thomas took refuge in the mount. Marcopolo a Venetian traveller visited India in 1288. His account of the church in India is of priceless value. The evidence of Marcopolo is a sufficient proof that in the 13th century Mylapore was accepted by the christians in India as the shrine of St. Thomas and the site of his martyrdom. St. Jerome (300 A. D.) speaks of the mission of St. Thomas to India as a fact universally known and believed in his time. In one of his epistles he writes, 'He (the son of God) was present in all places, with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyria etc.'

Pantaneus. In A. D. 190 Demetrius Bishop of Alexandria received a message from the Indian Christians to send them a teacher to instruct them in the faith and doctrines of Christ. At that time

one Pantaneus, a stoic philosopher and head of the celebrated school of Alexandria offered himself for the work. This also evidently shows that there was a christian church in India in the second century.

Thomas of Cana. In the year 345 A. D. a band of 400 Christians consisting of a Bishop Mar Joseph of Edessa, several priests, deacons and laymen emigrated to the Malabar coast of India and settled down at Cranganore. The head of this group was a merchant of great influence and wealth named Thomas of Cana. He obtained from the then king of Malabar Cheraman Perumal, several rights and privileges for the Christians.

Sapir Iso. Then again Bishops Mar Sapores and Mar Pheroz (Aproth) of Persia visited Quilon in Malabar in 825 A. D. along with a merchant Sapir Iso. The then Raja of Travancore allowed them and their descendants many privileges written on copper plates which still exist. Coming of these persons testify to the fact that there existed an ancient church in Malabar.

As there was regular trade connection between India and Palestine even before the time of our Lord, and as the apostles must have been eager to follow the advice of our Lord to go abroad and preach the gospel, it is quite likely that St. Thomas one of the apostles, has come to India in one of the trading ships to spread the gospel among the heathens. This surmise is supported by the apocryphal writings of the Acts of St. Thomas and the

archaeological researches made with regard to the coins of Gondophorus, in the last century. Besides, the writings of early christian Fathers such as Jerome, St. Ephraim, Gregory of Tours and the great Venetian traveller Marcopolo have testified to the same effect. The strong tradition of the Syrian Church and the tradition connected with St. Thomas mount near Mylapore have also strengthened the other evidences.

CHAPTER 4

THE CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST.

St. Thaddaeus (Adai) one of the seventy two disciples appointed by our Lord became the apostle to Edessa. After him his disciple St. Agai took his charge. Son of Abgar, King of Edessa, was an anti-christian and he killed Agai. So Agai's fellow worker St. Mari fled to Selucia the capital of Persia and continued his work there. Now St. Thomas had been travelling in Edessa, Selucia and Parthia etc. for gospel work. Edessan church claims St. Thomas as its founder and so his sacred remains were taken over to Edessa from India and buried there.

Originally it was the Persian Catholicos who sent Metropolitans to the Syrian Church of Malabar. The Persian Catholicate has been older than the Antiochene Patriarchate. But till the year A. D. 231, it was the custom of Persians to go to Antioch for consecration.

In A. D. 231 according the usual practice two clergymen Ahodoboy and Komjesu, were sent to Antioch from the Persian Church for consecration. Antioch was at this time a part of the Roman empire. There was hostility between the Roman and Persian Governments. Mistaking Ahodoboy and Komjesu for Persian spies, the Roman Government arrested them. Komjesu was killed. But Ahodoboy managed to escape to Jerusalem. When the Metropolitan of Antioch came to know this, he wrote about it to the Prelates of Jerusalem.

The Prelates of Jerusalem consecrated Ahodoboy and installed him as Catholicos giving authority to consecrate bishops and to perpetuate the Catholicate. He was also given a document to the effect that the Persians need not thereafter be sent to Antioch for consecration and that the name of the Catholicos should be remembered in the Great Intercession. Thus in the year 231 Selucian (Persian) Catholicate was permanently established. The second Catholicos Sahalupa was installed in A. D. 246. It was during the time of the third Catholicos by name 'Pappa' that the Synod of Nicea was held in the year 325 A. D.

In the Synod of Nicea also we see the importance given to the Catholicate. The following is an extract from the decisions of the Synod of Nicea which occur in the seventh chapter of the Canon of Bar Hebraus:-'According to the four divisions of the earth there should be four Patriarchates — one in

Rome in the West, another in Constantinople in the North, another in Antioch in the East, and still another in Alexandria in the South. But henceforth the Metropolitan of Jerusalem shall be called the fifth Patriarch and at the same time he shall be subject to the authority of the Metropolitan of Caesaria. The Metropolitan of the East, like the Patriarch, shall have authority to consecrate Metropolitans and he shall be known as Catholicos and his name shall be remembered in the Great Intercession. At Synods this Catholicos shall have precedence over all the Metropolitans and shall be accorded a seat of honour equal to that of the Patriarch of Jerusalem.'

The Catholicate which was given to Persia in the year A. D. 231 was thus confirmed in the Synod of Nicea in A. D 325, and flourished till the time of Bar Hebraus, the famous Canon law authority who was himself Catholicos for the East in the 13th century. But after his death in 1286 A. D. there was no regular continuity of Orthodox Catholicos to fill the Catholicate of the East on account of the decline of the Orthodox Syrians in Persia.

In the year A. D. 498 the Selucian Catholicos Akok (Acacius) became a Nestorian and so in his place, only in 629 A. D. a Catholicos by name Moruso was installed. Now his residence was Tigris in Persia. As there was one Nestorian Catholicos, to differentiate him, Orthodox Catholicos was designated Maphrian. Maphrian and Catholicos are the same and Maphrian was known in Great Intercession as Catholicos. There were times at which

Patriarch and Catholicos went on smoothly as well as unpleasantly. In the 9th century there was some quarrel between the then Catholicos and Patriarch. They then excommunicated each other. At last in A. D. 869 there was an agreement made at Kaparthutha between them and they became in friendly terms again.

In course of time due to the troubles from Muhammadans the Catholicate in Tigris was transferred to Mosul and Mar Mathai Dayara etc. In 1685 Mar Baselius was consecrated as Catholicos just for the occasion and sent over to Malabar. He died at Kothamangalam. He was followed in 1751 by Sakralla Mar Baselius who died at Kandanad. Until 19th century the Catholicate remained in Persia, some times with interruptions at long intervals.

After a long time in the year 1908 the late revered learned Konattu Mathen malpan of Malabar wrote to the Patriarch requesting him to transfer the Catholicate of the East from Persia to Malabar. This was granted in the year 1912 when Abdul Messiah the Antiochene Patriarch visited Malabar and installed the first Catholicos. The present Catholicos is the third here. Thus the Catholicate of the East has permanently been established in Malabar.

CHAPTER 5

CONNECTION OF OTHER CHURCHES WITH THE SYRIAN CHURCH.

As the power of the Orthodox Church in Persia had declined after the year 1490 A. D. for about a hundred years, it happened that the Nestorian Church sent their bishops to Malabar. But the Orthodox people without understanding the difference in faith, received the Nestorian bishops as if they were their own. But Nestorianism could not have any lasting effect in Malabar.

Roman connection. In the year 1595 the Roman Catholic Arch Bishop Menezes came from Goa to Malabar with orders from the Pope to subjugate the Orthodox Syrian Church. When Arch Bishop Menezes came Arch Deacon George was at the head of the Malabar Syrians. Arch Bishop Menezes demanded that Arch Deacon George be subject to him and he visited Syrian Churches giving ordination to candidates who would stand by him in the ensuing Synod. A Synod was convened by Arch Bishop in 1599 at Diamper and resolutions were passed to win the Syrians over to his side. The whole Syrian Church was subjugated for 54 years. Oppressions and the introduction of so many rites roused the patient spirit of the Syrians and in the year 1653 twentyfive thousand Syrians catching hold of a rope tied to a stone cross at Mattanchery Cochin, renounced all allegiance to the Pope. This is called

the famous Coonan Cross Oath. The immediate cause of this was that the Portuguese Romans were instrumental in drowning a bishop Mar Ahathalla (Iesaloho) who came to the rescue of the Syrians. All except 400 people returned to their original Orthodox Syrian faith. Now in Travancore the Romo Syrians number about seven lakhs and Romo Latinites number about four lakhs.

Antiochene connection. Then in the year 1665 Mar Gregorius Metropolitan of Jerusalem reached Malabar and consecrated Arch Deacon Thoma, the successor of Arch Deacon George (Geevarughese), as Mar Thoma first. Thus there was a succession of nine Metropolitans under the name of Mar Thoma till 1816. Most of these were from Pakalomatom family. Then there were six Metropolitans under the name of Mar Dionysius. The seventh prelate who rules over the Orthodox Syrian Church in Malabar now is known as the Catholicos of the East, Moran Mar Baselius. This Catholicate was trans-ferred from Persia and established here in Malabar by the Antiochene Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah in A. D. 1912. Malabar Church got direct contact from Antioch only from the year 1665. Before that all the prelates who came to Malabar were those sent from Persian Catholicate.

Anglican connection. From 1816 to 1840 there was some connection between the Syrian Church and the Anglican Church. The Anglican missionaries were allowed to preach in Syrian churches with the

definite understanding that they would not interfere in the faith and practice of the church or destroy its independence. After some years they began to introduce some alterations in the syrian liturgy. Besides, they preached against the doctrines of the Syrian Church. Hence the Syrian bishop Mar Dionysius fourth of Cheppad stoutly opposed all such attempts and convened a Synod at Mavelikara in 1836 (Synod agreement is else where inserted) and rejected C. M. S. proposals for reforms. So the Syrian Church severed all connections with the C. M. S. Due to the work of C M. S. there arose a reformed party in the Syrian Church under the leadership of Abraham malpan. By this time his nephew Mathews Mar Athanasius went to Antiochene Patriarch as a deacon and got consecrated in 1844. When the nephew came Abraham malpan was brave enough to continue his reforms. Dissension arose in the church and Mathews Mar Athanasius was excommunicated. Under his leadership there was a party which afterwards styled themselves as Mar Thoma Christians. Now they number about 1½ lakhs.

The Antiochene Patriarch Mar Peter 3rd came to Malabar in the year 1875 and excommunicated the reformist Metropolitan Mathews Mar Athanasius and gave the charge of Malabar Church to Pulikot Mar Dionysius. The Patriarch then consecrated six bishops of whom Mar Paul Athanasius of Kottayam together with two other bishops consecrated Mar Alvariz Julius on the 29th July 1882.



His Imperial Mejesty Haile Selassie I.
Emperor of Ethiopia.
(*in coronation robes.*)

The church considers one of the six bishops Mar Gregorius of Niranam (Parumala Mar Gregorius) as the greatest saint that has risen in Malabar. He passed away in 1902 at the age of 54 and was buried at Parumala. He was canonised as a saint recently. Every year on November 2, the death anniversary day, more than fifty thousand people gather at his shrine with offerings. So his shrine is a place of pilgrimage to the Syrians.

Mar Alvariz Julius of Ceylon together with Mar Paul Athanasius and Mar Gregorius of Niranam consecrated an American Fr. Joseph Rene Vilatte in the name of Mar Thimotheos on the 29th May 1892 in the cathedral of the Lady of Good Death at Colombo, as Arch Bishop for the American old Catholics who embraced the Syrian Church.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENT POSITION & FAITH OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH.

It is important to note that eminent personages every where in the world have got very high regard for the ancient Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar. As for instance a letter from Rev. Fr. Alban W. Cockerham, B. D. of England is quoted below:- "The Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar has a great future before it in the shaping of the new India which is coming to birth and only this mother church of India can do this important work of the future. To her is entrusted the apostolic mission of bringing

India under the rule of Christ. All other churches must follow her lead. The integrity of her faith, the validity of her orders, and the authenticity of her mission clearly prove that the Syrian Orthodox Church founded by St. Thomas the apostle, is the mother church of India."

The Servants of the Cross Society under the leadership of Very Rev. Remban M. P. Petros, B. A., B. D, L. T. has converted eighteen thousand depressed class people to the Syrian Church. Steps are being taken to establish churches in all the important cities of India. His Grace Mar Thoma Dionysius Metropolitan of the ancient See of Niranam has opened a mission centre at Trichinopoly outside Travancore and he is doing marvellous work there. He deserves encouragement in his mission field. Rev. Fr. L. S Jackson M. A, L. Th. of London who has embraced the Syrian faith, is a great help to Mar Dionysius in his missionary activities. He is a pious man, scholar and a very keen student of Liturgy, having translated seventeen Anaphoras (Liturgies) into English.

Even though there exists two parties in the Orthodox Syrian Church there is no difference in faith. It is likely that the two parties will be compromised. Communicants of both parties in Malankara number about five lakhs. Besides the Catholicos, the Orthodox Syrian Church has nine Metropolitans 400 priests and 500 churches.

The present Catholicos of the East was installed in 1929. He is very learned and extremely pious. He has attended the World conference on Faith and Order held in 1937 at Edinburgh where he created a powerful impression. A Scottish Paper 'The Daily Record and Mail' of 4th August 1937 writes thus on the visit of Catholicos to Edinburgh:- "H. H. the Catholicos of the East, chief priest of the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar, is the most notable visitor to the World conference on Faith and Order. Autograph hunters tumbled over each other yesterday for the signature of Edinburgh's most spectacular visitor. Patriarchal and dignified he walked the capital's street beaming with kindness, a little perturbed that he seemed spectacular. He signed the books, shook proferred hands, patted the heads of children........ The Catholicos is the most fascinating of all delegates to the World conference on Faith and Order representative of all the churches of the world."

There are 27 High schools, 25 Middle schools and over one hundred Primary schools for the church. The Sunday school association, the Bethany ashram, Servants of the Cross, the Martha Mariam Samajam, the Mount Thabor ashram and convent, Coimbatore Christa Sishya ashram, the Foreign mission, the Immanuel Missionary Society, the Eraviperoor St. Thomas Hospital and the Syrian Christian Congress are some of the important activities of the church.

As already seen before, the Catholicate which died out in Persia was re-established in Malankara in 1912 by the Canonical Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah. The rival and uncanonical Patriarch Mar Abdulla who usurped the throne of Antioch was against this establishing of Catholicate and thereby granting autonomy. The rival Patriarch excommunicated the then Malankara Metropolitan thereby causing litigations and so many compromise meetings were conducted in vain. The young men of Malabar called together a general meeting under the presidency of H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece last year. In the Prince's speech (seen elsewhere in this book) he has made it clear that the acceptance of Catholicate is the only sure way for a compromise and it is just and proper for the Patriarch to do so. It is hoped that the Patriarch would grant autonomy to the Indian church without bargaining for it. Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He did not found church to be ruled by others, but as independent entities to do God's will on earth. The only connection between churches is that of self forgetting service. The great among you must be servant of all. If in this spirit Antioch can grant autonomy to the Indian church, she may be enabled to do her work for the Indian republic for which she has been preserved for the last twenty centuries.

There is no doubt that the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar is one of the oldest churches in Christendom and the most ancient church in India. She holds the apostolic faith of the undivided church.



Her Imperial Majesty Itegne Menen
Empress of Ethiopia.

She maintains the Nicene creed as first accepted and has not introduced into it the addition of Filioque clause. She condemns the Monophysitism of Eutyches and rejects the Diophysitism of Leo in its technical form and wording. Eutyches held that the human nature of our Lord was absorbed into the divine nature and lost its special characteristics and as such our Lord had only one nature *viz.* the divine nature. Orthodox faith is that the two natures of our Lord are inseparably united that the one is not absorbed into the other and lost. Orthodox Syrians view the church as a divinely established body, membership within which is necessary for salvation and the Holy Scripture is the inspired Word of God, besides laying great stress on the holy traditions.

In common with all ancient churches she keeps seven sacraments, prayer for the departed and invocation of saints. The Holy Eucharist is her central act of worship of which she believes that it is not only a sacrament but also a sacrifice. Besides Wednesdays and Fridays she observes five seasons of lent. She holds the Canon compiled by the Great Maphrian Bar Hebraeus, the light of the East and West. To the faith of the one Holy catholic and apostolic Church in her undivided state she has not added anything nor has she taken away anything from it. Thus she has preserved pure to the present day, the ancient faith of Christendom.

CHAPTER 7

* THE MALABAR CHRISTIAN COPPER PLATES.

Thomas of Cana who founded a city in Cranganore for himself and for about 400 foreigners including Bishop Mar Joseph of Edessa, several priests and deacons, had obtained from Cheraman Perumal the overlord of all Malabar, the famous copper plate charters of 345 A. D. The Thomas Cana Plates (a set of two) are the earliest of the charters granted to Malabar Christians. These two plates are now lost. But a copy of the inscriptions taken by Portuguese missionaries are kept in the British museum. An English rendering of this is given on P. 60 of Mackenzie's 'Christianity.'

I. The Thomas Cana Plates.
(Abstract of contents)

Date. 345 A. D., according to Malabar tradition.

Donor. Cheraman Perumal, according to Malabar tradition. Cocurangan, according to a Portuguese version in a MS. volume in the British museum, dated 1604 A. D.

Donee. Thomas Cananeo, a merchant prince.

Purport. 1) Thomas is given the title of Cocurangan Cananeo, which probably means the Chera Emperor's merchant.

* Reproduced from 'Malabar Christians & their ancient documents.'

2) He is given also the city of Cranganore and a jungle close by, which he converts into a town with a church and 62 houses.

3) He is granted the privilege of using seven kinds of Musical instruments, a palanquin or an elephant as a vehicle.

4) Dignity is conferred upon him – probably the title of Mapilla, son-in-law to the King.

5) Besides, he and his posterity, associates and relations as well as the followers of his faith *ie.* all Malabar Christians are granted five kinds of taxes.

Place. The document was executed while the King was in Carnellur. (Cranganore.)

II. Quilon Church Plates. (Fascicle 1)

The second set of Plates were granted in A. D. 880 by Quilon King Ayyan Adigal to Quilon Orthodox Church built by Sapir Iso. There were three plates in the 1st set. The last one is missing. The first one is in the Old Seminary, Kottayam and the 2nd one is with Mar Thoma Metropolitan in Poolatheen, Thiruvalla.

Date. Circa 880 A. D. the fifth year of Sthanu Ravi, as the document says.

Donor. Ayyan, King of Venad which was roughly the southern portion of modern Travancore.

Donee. The Tarisa (Orthodox Christian) church built at Quilon in Travancore by Sabriso, who refounded the city of Quilon in 825.

Purport. 1) Four women of the Ilava caste together with their eight children and one family of the washerman caste are given to the church for menial service.

2) These low caste people are exempted from paying certain specified rates and taxes.

3) The church is made the custodian of the steel yard and weights and the Kappan (Stamp), all of which previously belonged to the King of Venad.

4) The Ilavas and the people of washerman caste given to the church are allowed to go into the Quilon fort and the Christian streets inspite of their being members of two polluting castes.

5) The right of trying the cases of these people is reserved for the Quilon church.

6) All these have been granted at the instance of Sabriso.

Place. Quilon in Travancore.

III. Quilon Church Plates. (Fascicle 2.)

In this second set of Quilon plates there were four plates out of which the 2nd & 3rd are in Old Seminary and the last is in Poolatheen.

Date. C. 880 A. D. later than the previous set of plates. (set I.)

Donor. Ayyan, King of Venad.

Donees. a) The Quilon church (of set one).

b) The Quilon Jews (probably their authorised leaders).

c) The Manigramam *ie.* the authorised leaders of the indigenous christians of Quilon who had been there when Sabriso came, some time before his refounding of the city in A. D. 825.

Purport. a) Grants to the church.

1) One family of carpenters, four Vellalas (the agricultural caste of Sudras) and two of another caste. (The plate is damaged at this place.)

2) Extensive lands within specified boundaries.

3) The right of trying the cases of the people living in the above area.

4) Protection of the church and lands by Venad militia called the six hundred and the Jewish and Manigramam leaders.

5) Fee for weighing with the steel yard and weights of set I.

b) Remuneration to the Jewish leaders.

1) Remission of certain dues as well as collection of certain others.

2) The privilege of assessing customs duty on dutiable goods.

3) The right of co-operating with Govt. officials in fixing the prices of goods and in all other business of the King (presumably commercial).

4) Seventy two other privileges (mostly social). Only the privilege of bringing on an elephant water for ceremonial purification is specified. The rest are indicated by an etcetera. All the seventy two must have been already enumerated in a previous document and therefore well known at that time.

5) The privilege of keeping in custody the daily collection of customs duty.

6) The right of withholding the above money and the weighing fee already referred to [(a), 5], until wrongs done to them are redressed.

7) The right of trying their own cases.

8) The privilege of occupying the town of Quilon as tenants.

c) Remuneration to the Manigramam leaders. The same as that to the Jewish leaders. [(b), 1 to 8]

Place. Quilon, as in the case of the previous set.

IV. Iravi Korthan's Plate.

This is another copper plate given to a Cranganore christian named Iravi Korthan by Emperor

Vira Raghava in A. D. 1320. By this also christians were given certain rights and privileges. This is still kept in the Old Seminary, Kottayam.

Date. 1320 A. D. according to Kielhorn.

Donor. Vira Raghava Chakravarti.

Donee. Iravi Korthan of Cranganore, "Lord of the city, with the grandiose title 'The Chera King's Great merchant supreme in the whole world."

Purport. 1) Iravi Korthan is given the office of Manigramam, very probably the headship of the Cranganore merchants.

2) Several social privileges also are allowed. (See the privileges mentioned in the previous sets of plates).

3) He is given the monopoly of the overland and sea-borne trade.

4) All the merchants and the five artisan classes (carpenter, blacksmith etc.) are made subservient to him.

5) He is allowed brokerage on all sorts of goods and also customs duty or toll.

6) His children and grand children and their descendants can enjoy these as a hereditable possession.

Place. Cranganore.

CHAPTER 8

PERSIAN CROSSES & MALABAR CHRISTIAN DYNASTY.

In 1547 a stone cross was found at Mylapore in Madras while the Roman Christians (Portuguese) were trying to build a church there. The cross contains certain inscriptions in Pallavi language which was the official language of Persia. Two other stone crosses containing similar inscriptions are to be found at Kottayam in Valiapalli of which one is older than the other. One of them contains Syriac inscriptions also in Estrangeli. It is supposed that the smaller as well as the older cross at Kottayam and the cross at Mylapore belong to the 7th or 8th century A. D. and the other at Kottayam to the 10th century.

The inscriptions on the cross at Mylapore are variously translated. Dr. Burnell translated it as follows:–

'In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering of this one; He who is true Christ and God above and guide ever pure.'

The Syriac inscription at the bottom of the bigger cross in Valiapalli is Galatians VI : 14. "Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

No records exist to tell who gave these stone tablets and from where they were obtained. It is supposed that some Persian sculptor living perhaps

in Cranganore must have inscribed them and they were taken to these various places by some pious Christians. These inscriptions show how the connection between the Indian Church and Persian Church continued to exist in the 8th & 9th centuries.

Malabar Christian dynasty (10th century). Gouvea's Jornada and other Portuguese and Dutch books have many details about the powers of the Malabar Christians.

Says Gouvea:–

"With the favours and increases which the christians had obtained, the Christianity extended and spread so much that the christians claimed to elect among themselves their own king, who should govern them all, though scattered in so many parts subject to so many diverse kings and who should defend them and protect them from the violences and tyrannies of the infidels; and acting upon their resolutions, they chose as their first king one called Beliartes, whose title was King of the Christians of St. Thomas and for some years they were in this power of having a distinct king, until the death of the last, who had no successor, where upon the King of Diamper with whom he was adopted came to inherit his estates and lands; and when the Kings of Diamper failed, he of Cochin through a similar adoption next inherited the kingdom; wherefore, the kings of Cochin claim to have more jurisdiction and right on the Christians of St. Thomas than the other kings in whose lands they dwell, and when the

Admiral Vascoda Gama came to Cochin in the 2nd fleet, which left Portugal in the year 1502, the christians sent him an embassy in which they said that they asked him to be pleased to accept them under his protection and the protection of his king and in token of the vassalage they wished to give to the King of Portugal, they sent him a red staff garnished at the ends with silver and having at the top three silver bells which was the sceptre used by their kings whom they had lost."

There was no Christian King in Malabar in 1502. But a palace of his existed in Udayamperoor (Diamper) in North Travancore during the early years of the 16th century. It is said in Jornada that Fr. Luis de Salvador, a missionary, one of the eight Franciscans who had come with capt. Cabral in 1501, was at Cananore and Cochin, preached in Malabar, tarried some time at the court of the King of Diamper (vacant palace of the extinct dynasty), went on a visit to St. Thomas at Mylapore and acted once as ambassador between the Portuguese authorities and the King of Vijayanagar. Fr. Luis seems to have been killed in Vijayanagar about 1511 A. D.

CHAPTER 9

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF SYRIAN CHRISTIANS BEFORE THE 16th CENTURY.

The Christians of Malabar were known as Nazaranees in ancient days. These Nazaranees considered themselves as belonging to the North and South of Malabar with their respective centres at Cranganore and Kurakeni Kollum (Quilon). Legal documents of those days bear proof of this matter. They referred about themselves in the ancient documents as belonging to the particular house and place in which they lived. This specification originated from either of these two towns according as they belonged to the Northern or Southern part of Malabar.

Kings of Kerala conferred upon them high honours and many titles. Being in influence at the palace they were greatly respected by the rest. In the sphere of commerce too, they dominated. Trade was their main profession in life. Quilon, Cranganore and Kayamkulam which were outstanding places in trade in those days were their centres. The facilities of the first two towns for water communication were cleverly utilised and they traded with foreign countries mainly in exporting pepper and amassed much money to their credit. The illustrious social life, the steady and speedy improvements of economic conditions, helped these people to be masters of the depressed classes around them. The christians settled

disputes among the depressed classes and maintained peace among them.

The youngsters were trained at arms from the early age of eight till they completed twenty five. Being well trained at arms, the kings were always proud of having more christian subjects. These well trained christians were a source of terror to the other kings. So to their ruler it brought respect and regards from the other kings along with the privilege of commanding a greater number of christian soldiers. Their meritorious services brought home to them favour and admiration from their own king. As a mark of appreciation titles such as Mappillai, Panicker, Tharakan were bestowed upon certain christians. Chiefs among these favourites were granted seats of honour before the king.

These matters can authoritatively be established from the writings of the historian Lacrose of the sixteenth century. He says, "The Syrian Bishops exercise absolute powers on everything besides on spiritual affairs. They judge cases either civil or ecclesiastical, but not criminal ones occuring in their diocese. It was an exclusive right and privilege exercised and enjoyed by the bishop over his people. Since these powers of the bishops are undisputed non-christian judges had only to hear criminal cases of the christians. Bishops are required by the king only to render military aid in addition to the ordinary tax the people have to pay. And as a matter of fact wars are few. ....

........Priests are married and monks and nuns are seldom found. Christians always go out armed with guns, spears etc. without any restriction whatsoever. Military training was compulsory for youngsters and in general they were experts in hunting and excelled both in forests as well as battle fields. Since these people were noted for their gallantry, honesty, loyalty and other noble traits of character, kings always sought their favours and in return liberally helped them. On credit of their merit the christian subjects were a source of surety to the king at peace and war and earned him respect from other rulers. Such honours, allowed only to ambassadors as riding on elephant and sitting on carpet in the presence of king were given them. Cheraman Perumal emperor of Malabar granted them powers which were not even conferred upon his Nair subjects. Christians were respected next to Brahmins. They rule the lower castes such as mazons, smiths etc. Under the christians the cocoanut cultivators organise themselves. These cultivators submit their complaints if any before their christian lords who seek for them remedy and redress either severally or jointly. Among themselves the christians were well organised internally and externally. If any one dared to interfere with their privileges they fight for it collectively. If a lower caste assaulted a christian he will be killed or punished by forcing him to make offerings to the church. Out of superiority complex and earnestness of the christians to maintain the high heritage they never mingle with the low class

people or even touch them. Nairs, the reputed warriors of Kerala also admire the christians and are always keenly interested in their alliance. In courts too christians have privileges equal to an ambassador and as such they can ride on elephant or be seated with the king on the State Dais. Once the king of Parur granted these privileges to Nairs also, upon which christians were infuriated and so the king was forced to withdraw the new privileges granted to Nairs as he could not afford the displeasure of the christians." Such was the mighty heritage of the christians of ancient days and this we can understand from the pages of history.

CHAPTER 10

MAVELIKARA PADYOLA.

Agreement made in the Mavelikara Synod presided over by Mar Dionysius of Cheppad in the year 1836 A. D.

"In the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghots, the one true God, this Padyola (agreement) is drawn up in the year of our Lord 1836 corresponding to 5th Makaram 1011 at the church dedicated to the virgin Mother of our Lord, at Mavelikara between Mar Dionysius Metropolitan of the Jacobite (Orthodox) Syrian Church of Malabar, subejct to the supremacy of Mar Ignatius Patriarch, the Father of Fathers and the chief of chiefs ruling the throne of St. Peter of Antioch, the mother of all churches, and

his successor Mar Kurilos and the Vicars, priests and parishioners of Ankamali and other churches under the charge of the said Metropolitan.

That where as an interview held at Kottayam between the Rt. Rev. Daniel, Lord Bishop of Calcutta and the Metropolitan, in Vrischigam last, it was proposed by the former that certain changes should be introduced in the liturgies and ordinances of our Syrian Church and where as it was stated in reply that a conference of all the churches would be held on the subject and its determination made known, we the Jacobite Syrians being subject to the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch and observing as we do, the liturgies and ordinances instituted by the prelates sent under his command, cannot deviate from such liturgies and ordinances and maintain a discipline contrary thereto, and a man of one persuasion being not authorised to preach and admonish in the church of another following a different persuasion without the permission of the respective Patriarchs, we cannot permit the same to be done against us, and our churches being built by the aid of the prelates sent under the order of the Patriarch and on the wishes of the people of each parish and ornamented by their money, and as the accounts of the annual income accruing to our churches under the head of voluntary contributions offerings etc. are as required by the rules, furnished to our bishops, as is the custom in the churches of Antioch as well as in the churches of this and other countries following

different persuasions we are without the power and feel disinclined to follow and cause to be followed a different procedure from the above.

That the Honourable Col. Macaulay having taken a loan of 3000 star pagodas from (Valia) great Mar Dionysius who died in 983, gave him a bond for the same. The interest on the amount having fallen in arrears, Mar Dionysius Metropolitan who died in 992 made a representation to Col. Munro and received the interest with which he (Dionysius) built the Seminary at Kottayam. Having also collected at the Seminary the money brought by the prelates that had come here from Antioch and the property left by the late bishops of the Pakalomatom family, Mar Dionysius laid out a portion of this together with the donation made by His Highness the Maharaja on behalf of the Syrian Christian youths on Kanom and therewith met the expense of their education. The Reverend missionaries who have come down to Kottayam in their profuse benevolence taught the youths at the Seminary English and other languages, protected our children like loving fathers, caused books to be printed for the benefit of all classes, rendered all necessary help in maintaining the prevailing discipline of the Syrian church, caused the annual interest due to be drawn on the receipt of the Metropolitan, had superintendence over the affairs of the Seminary, and caused ordinations to be made agreeable to the request of the people and the power of the prelates. While

affairs were being thus conducted the missionaries took to managing the Seminary without consulting the Metropolitan, themselves expended the interest money drawn annually on the receipt of the Metropolitan, dispersed the deacons instructed in the Seminary, conducted affairs in opposition to the discipline of the church and created dissensions amongst us, all of which have occasioned much sorrow and vexation. For this reason we do (would) not follow any faith or teaching other than the Orthodox faith of the Jacobite Syrian Christians, to the end, that we may obtain salvation through the prayers of ever happy, holy, and ever blessed mother of God, the redresser of all complaints and through the prayers of all saints. Witness Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

CHAPTER 11

REUNION OF CHURCHES.

Extract of the speech of His Grace Mar Theodosius on reunion of Churches, delivered in the Amsterdam conference held during the fortnight between 22nd Aug. and 4th Sept. 1948.

The church is a divine institution founded by God. Its origin is from above and not from below. As such it is not a man-made thing. It is the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ and the store house of

truth and grace. It is a visible Society and incorporation into it through Baptism and membership thereof is very essential to salvation. Being a divine institution its system of administration is also divinely established. In other words it is chiefly hierarchical or episcopal. This is being done through the ministry which is a divine gift to the Church in its three fold form. Episcopacy is not a mere ornament or appendage to the Church. It is the very core or essence of the Church. Where there is no valid ministry or apostolic succession there cannot be any valid sacraments which are instituted by Christ as the visible means for conveying invisible grace. The sacraments are seven in number. Conformity to the historic Episcopate is inevitable and essential to the very life, existence and continuity of the Church. In this sense St. Ignatius says 'where there is the bishop there is the church' and so forth.

As against this the Protestant, chiefly the non-episcopal and non-confirmist contention has the following form. They mainly follow the Calvinistic line and teaching. Salvation is attained through faith in the death and atonement of Christ. The Church real is an invisible society composed of the elect. For the membership in the Church baptism is not essential. Sacraments are non-essential for salvation. Episcopacy is a myth. Every layman is a sharer in the Divine Kingship and priest-hood of our Lord. As such every man, in some cases woman also is a competent minister of the Word and the sacraments. Evangelism and personal devotion

to our Lord are the only things that matter. Emphasis on doctrines only separates the different Christian denominations. Irrespective of faith and even without baptism and agreement on cardinal doctrinal points, every member of any Church should be free to communicate from the Altars or Holy Tables of other communions. Their argument goes on in this strain which is hardly agreeable or palatable to the Orthodox and Catholic conceptions of the Church, sacraments and ministry.

A letter published by the Moscow Patriarchate some time ago insists on Theological and Doctrinal agreement between the uniting churches before any scheme of reunion could be put into operation. They are perfectly right there. This view is supported by all the Orthodox churches and many of the Anglo-catholics in England. A dive into the teachings of the early Fathers of the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene period will convince us of this truth. Therefore may I implore you to read or study the early Fathers as were done by the Pioneers of the Oxford movement of 1833 – Keble, Pussey, Newman, Froude, Neale and others – when they attempted to revive the Catholic faith in the Church of England which happened to be tampered with during the Reformation period in the 16th century.

What the Orthodox visualise when they speak of reunion of churches is not the absorption of one body by another or uniformity as in Romanism, but a diversity in unity established on the basis of

doctrinal agreement. This Roman Catholic method of effecting reunion is technically called ***the way of absorption.***

Each of the uniting churches can and ought to preserve all that is important in its traditions while absolutely accepting the doctrinal positions implied or expressed in the teachings of the undivided faith of the church. This is the common platform where we can all meet together, each communion contributing its mite to the fullness and richness of our Christian heritage. This way which is advocated by the Orthodox churches is technically called ***the way of comprehension.***

When the non-episcopalians and the non-confirmists discuss about the reunion of churches what they have mostly in mind is a loose federation of communions of churches as they are, based on a sort of common factor agreements and the restoration of Intercommunion with no reference what-so-ever to agreements in Faith or Doctrine. This is technically called ***the way of undenominationalism.*** This is something which the Orthodox and the Catholics dread. To them intercommunion is not the starting point in a scheme of reunion but the focus or goal of reunion based on doctrinal agreements. They would never have open communion as such and would not even dream of inviting any body and every body to participate in the Body and Blood of our Lord. Such things to them are sacrilegious and in their view will prove an hindrance to the wider reunion of churches for which we all long and pray.

To the Orthodox and to the Non-Roman Catholics the reunion of churches and the prayer of our Lord regarding the same would remain unfulfilled so long as the Roman Catholic Church also does not come in at some stage or other. They are the largest christian body in the world. Perhaps in the providence of God a time may come when they would feel not inclined to impose upon other churches as doctrines for salvation certain special dogmas which they have framed infallibility, supremacy, etc. in the Vatican council of 1870. That would be the day for reunion with them.

Any one loving our Lord can hardly fail to long and pray for the reunion of churches. We should see that we do all we can to help the fulfilment of the high-priestly prayer of our Lord. But the difficulty arises when we come face to face with the different Orthodox or Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the reunion of churches. The Orthodox and the Non-Roman Catholic view of the reunion of churches is that there cannot be and ought not to be any re-union of churches except on the basis of unity in Faith, doctrine, sacraments, orders and worship. The Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1930 largely approaches this ideal. In this the Anglican minimum basis for reunion has been put out as the acceptance by the uniting churches of the Bible, the Creed, the Sacraments and the orders.

The Orthodox all through have maintained the faith once delivered to the saints without adding to as

in Romanism or dropping out from as in extreme Protestantism the original heritage. The Orthodox faith etymologically means the correct faith, the straight faith, the unadulterated faith. To the Orthodox, life and death in the correct faith is inseparable from salvation. Hence the appeal or the demand they make for the acceptance of the undivided faith of the church is the irreducible minimum basis for the reunion of churches. This faith has been defined, codified, explained, exposed and taught in the early ecumenical councils of the church. Any kind of patch up reunions ignoring these truths will only be temporary and that eventually widen the gulf of separation between the uniting churches instead of narrowing the same. There ought not to be an arbitrary or artificial scheme or effort for reunion. Any short cut method is doomed to failure. If we ever attempted it we shall eternally be thrown out from the pale of Orthodox and eastern and finally Catholic christendom at large. What the Orthodox visualise is an organic unity resulting from unity in Faith, doctrines, sacraments, orders and worship. So the irreducible minimum basis for reunion from the point of the Orthodox is the acceptance by the uniting churches of the undivided Faith of the church before its division into East and West in the eleventh century.

CHAPTER 12

GREEK CHURCH & MALANKARA CHURCH.

Extract of the speech delivered by H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece on the 16th Oct. 1949 at the public meeting held at Kottayam under the auspices of the Malabar Jacobite (Orthodox Syrian Christian) Peace league.

Affairs of Malankara Church.

Before I came here, I knew that there were ancient Christians here, but like many people unacquainted with them. I had a great desire to know them and it may have been a foreboding to help you in your difficulties. Six months ago I got to know you. I found you are true christians in the oldest and purest traditions of Christianity. I have been greatly impressed by the hallowed atmosphere which exists in your churches. I marvel that after so many centuries and tribulations suffered, you have succeeded in remaining thus. Now going deep into the affairs of Christianity here I find that you have your difficulties, that you are afflicted by dissensions and that many of you are worried and suffer extremely from this state of affairs. But at the same time as I find afflictions I note a strong desire to end your troubles and restore harmony in the church. This seems to be a sign that God's ways are not ours

and that a great hope exists that the church is going through these trials to a more brilliant future. It is possible that this trial is necessary for the church, for it to blossom forth eventually much stronger. For, it seems to me that this suffering shows that things are rather this way. I would be much less hopeful, should I find indifference to this state of affairs. For it is indifference which kills faith and not strife. By what I have heard and read, these trials began only when I was four years old - 36 years ago. It began with Patriarch Abdulla's excommunication of Mar Dionysius and Patriarch Abdul Messiah's establishment of the ancient Catholicate in the person of Mar Ivanios of Kandanad. My impression is that, then you were victims of repercussions of interior dissensions in Syria. But a state of affairs was created which has led to the present troubles.

I do not think that there is any cause to be unduly alarmed by these troubles. Some of you I have noted, appear to think that perhaps you, here are more troubled than in other parts, where as visitors of this country like myself are struck how tolerant the country India is in matters of religion, more so I can say that any other in the world. Some of you also seem to think that the strife is over details of no importance. But I sincerely do not think this is the case. Your problems are serious ones and I may say there is a reasonable resemblance to those with which since time immemorial have plagued our Greek Orthodox Church also.



Their Majesties King Paul I & Queen Frederika of the Hellenes.

Affairs of Greek Church.

Similar troubles afflicted our churches at the very birth of Christianity in the first centuries of our era when the Bysantine empire ruled from Constantinople, extended to Non-Greek countries such as Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Abyssinia, Western Persia and to the borders of Armenia. Nationalist movements in these areas against the Greek authority took the forms of Nestorianism in Persia and Monophysitism in Egypt, Syria, Armenia and Abyssinia. We Greeks lost our holds on all these Christians, because we made the mistake to try to rule autocratically from the centre. It has even been said that if Islam was able to gain supremacy, it was because of the quarrel between the Syrian and Greek Christians. The same happened later in the eleventh century when the Roman Catholics broke with us. Since then we have learnt and have never attempted again to impose ourselves in that way.

Today we are a decentralised church under the spiritual supremacy of ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. We have today twelve autocephalic and four autonomous churches. First they are the five historical churches of Jerusalem, Cyprus Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople in that historical sequence of seniority. Then comes Serbia (Yugoslavia), Russia, Greece, Rumania, Poland, Albania and Bulgaria. Last seven were granted autocephalay by the Patriarch of Constantinople by what is called Tomes (Decree). In addition

to these twelve autocephalic churches we have four autonomous churches which are Finland, Estonia, Czechoslovokia, Lativia. In both these types of independent churches there is a common body of doctrines the nature of which is subject to control of the Patriarch of Constantinople. But in matters of administration, including the ordination of bishops, these churches are internally independent. Yet inspite of these flexibility of organisation, we have still had difficulties in our church; for instance it took from 1828 to 1850 for the church of Greece to be recognised as autocephalic. The contention of the Greek National church was that it was ruled by a synod subject to the State. The Patriarch however did not recognise the situation and declared the church of Greece as dissident (out of communion). It was only by the chance death of the Greek ambassador in Constantinople in 1850 that a reconciliation was effected. The Patriarch attended the funeral and was awarded a decoration by the Greek Government where upon a favourable atmosphere was created. Negotiations were resumed and the autocephalay of the church of Greece was recognised by Patriarchal decree. If the church of Greece has had difficulties of this nature, you will understand how much more natural it is for you who are distant from the Patriarchate of Antioch, to have yours too. Again in the Rumanian Church autocephalay was only granted after 26 years of bitter strife from 1859 to 1885 and the Bulgarian schism was only

recently dispelled in 1945. It lasted from 1870 (75 years).

Independence to be granted to Malankara.

The existence of the Catholicos in Malabar is an expression of Malankara Nationalism. This fact is irrespective of the legal aspect of the question. The remedy therefore for the present state of affairs is in my opinion to recognise this fact. The quicker it is recognised by the competent authorities the earlier will your troubles end. We in the Greek Church have found that the granting of independence to our various autocephalic churches has rather strengthened than anything else our ancient church. The acquisition of flexibility has made us more immune from such troubles that are today plaguing you. Why should not your ancient church learn from these experiences of ours? It is usual for Constantinople to grant autocephalay to Greek Orthodox Churches existing in politically sovereign countries. Now that India has attained independent status it seems to me all the more logical that a similar way of solving your church matters be adopted.

I hope what knowledge gleaned from outside can be of some assistance to you or at least bring you some consolation in your plight. You will perhaps have been made to realise that you do not stand alone faced with such problems. Others have experienced them in the course of time and their

solution has never proved unattainable. It is for God to show the right path in this matter and I pray that He lighten it for us for the glory of your ancient church and for His Kingdom on earth especially for you my brethren in this distant corner of our world.

The informations given below do not include in the above speech, but they are gathered from other sources.

The church of Greece from the point of outward organisation consists of sixty seven dioceses. Though it is autocephalous it has the Patriarch of Constantinople as its ecumenical head. The Brother-hood of 'Zoe' renders much service to the church of Greece. It is a group of very pious and ascetic clergy and laymen who live under the spiritual guidance of the Archimandrite Seraphim Papakostas who is a priest of great erudition and unique virtue. All its members, whether clerical or lay, are celibate and live together in their own building praying, fasting, preaching, confessing the people and at the same time editing religious, moral, edifying books and their magazine 'Zoe' has many more subscribers and readers than any other magazine or newspaper in Greece.

It is seen that Apostolos Makrakis a Greek philosopher and saint has written so many religious books and his works had been commended by His Holiness Athenagoras, the present Patriarch of



Their Royal Highnesses Prince Peter & Princess Irene of Greece.

Constantinople when he was the Greek Metropolitan of America. Certainly Makrakis' books are very useful to study Orthodox faith and Messrs K. Andronis and P. Vassilakos of Chicago have to be congratulated for the pains they are taking to publish them.

Now it is worthy of note that H. M. the King Paul of Greece is a firm supporter of the church. His Majesty gave a hearty reception in the palace on 29th Sept. 1948 to the Most Rev. Mar Theodosius and Rev. Fr. K. Philipose, B.A. on their return from Amsterdam conference. His Majesty is very pious and interested very much in church affairs as well as state affairs. Church in Greece is the full expression of Greek life. The church has been doing good work and it is thriving well under the Zoe movement which is supported by the Arch Bishop. It was with great enthusiasm that His Majesty heard from the guests about the Syrian Church. The Syrian delegates were very much attracted by the cordial reception they were given in Greece. The people of Greece have great veneration for their gracious King and Queen as they are always looking after the welfare of their subjects.

CHAPTER 13

THE ANCIENT CATHEDRAL CHURCH AT CHEPPAD AND THE SYRIAN CHRISTIAN CONGRESS.

Extract of the speech delivered on the 14th May 1950 by the author at the 50th annual meeting of the Syrian Christian Congress held at Cheppad, Travancore, S. India.

Ancient Cheppad Church.

Up to A.D. 1300 the Christians of Cheppad, Pallipad, Karthicapally, Karuvatta and Karichal had been the members of Haripad Church and they used to attend services there. But about the year 1300 with the help of the Karthicapally King and Kanjoor Valiathan the Chief of Cheppad, the church which stood near the present Haripad hospital site had been unbuilt and with the materials of this church, two churches were made one at Karthicapally and other at Cheppad. The Cheppad Church was first built near a deep tank Kuzhiamkulam and hence it was called Kuzhiamkulangara Church, meaning thereby church on the bank of a deep tank. Gouvea, the historian refers to this church in that name when he describes about the Synod of Diamper. After four or five years' existence of the church on the bank of the tank it was shifted from there to the present site which is some 100 yards north east of the old site.

The ancient paintings on the walls of the Holy of Holies testify to the antiquity of the church.

Archaeologists have remarked that these paintings were drawn much earlier than the coming of Portuguese in Travancore. These pictures according to tradition were drawn at least six hundred years ago. The magazines such as 'Information and Listener' of Travancore Government, and the 'Ancient Christian Fellowship Review' of Los Angeles, America have published the photos of this church and articles on its antiquity and mural paintings.

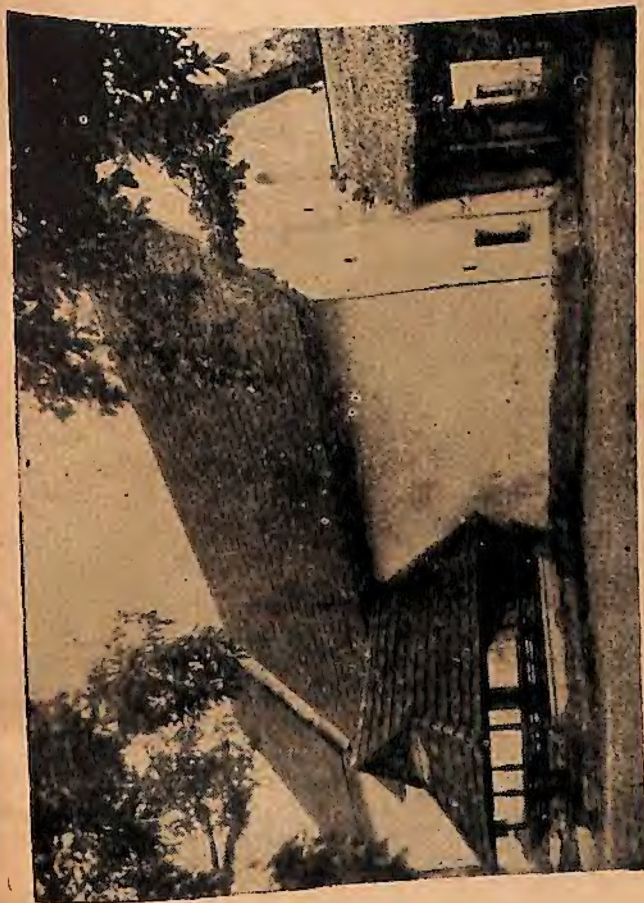
Annunciation to the Holy Virgin, meeting of the blessed Mother with Elizabeth, the journey of St. Mary to Bethlehem with St. Joseph, birth of our Lord, coming of the wise men from the East, Simon the old man taking in his arms the infant Jesus in the temple of Jerusalem, the baptism of our Lord, transfiguration, several scenes of crucifixion, pictures of the apostles, garden of Eden and the scene of Jehovah appearing to Moses in the burning bush are depicted clearly on the walls of the Holy of Holies. Representatives of the famous National Geographic Society of America have visited this church and taken photos of these mural paintings to be published in their magazine. During the reconstruction of this impaired ancient church which is to take place soon, these paintings may be destroyed. Then these photos will be of great help. As advised by American experts we are hoping to manage the reconstruction in such a way that we may preserve the paintings if possible.

Cheppad Mar Dionysius.

When any Syrian Christian hears the name Cheppad, the first thought that comes to the mind will be about His Grace Metropolitan Mar Dionysius of Cheppad. It is not widely known as to how much sacrifices he made and how courageously he fought to keep up the faith of the church from the time he was consecrated as bishop in 1825 to his death in 1855. The dead body of this holy man has been entombed in the Holy of Holies of this parish church. In 1600, when Arch Bishop Menazes with the help of the Government, tried to convert the Syrians into the Roman Catholic fold, he entered into this church also and destroyed numerous Syriac literature and put up idols, and subjugated the parishioners. But in 1653 when our forefathers threw away the Roman yoke by the famous*'Coonan Cross oath' this church also turned to the original Orthodox faith.

In the beginning of the 19th century the Syrian church became connected with the C. M. S. missionaries. Our forefathers were ready to co-operate with them on the understanding that they would not interfere with the faith of the Syrian Church. The missionaries were even allowed to teach in the Syrian Seminary. But gradually they began to compel the Syrians to change their faith. Since Mar Dionysius of Cheppad opposed this compulsion

* The word 'Coonan' means bent. Oath made at the bent stone cross which still exists.



The Ancient Orthodox Syrian Church, Cheppad, Travancore, S. India.
(The walls having seriously cracked in many places, this ancient Church has to be reconstructed soon. Donations towards its reconstruction will gratefully be accepted.)

for preservation of faith without caring for the consequences, his name has to be depicted in golden letters in the Syrian Church history. In a meeting of the representatives of the Syrian Church held at Mavelikara under the leadership of His Grace in January 1836, it was decided to discard the modifications of faith the missionaries introduced. By this he was put to much troubles at the hands of missionaries. Historians have recorded that His Grace was pious innocent and very zealous in the faith of his church.

The two storied buildings in the premises of the local church were built by him one and a quarter centuries ago and yet they have got all the comforts and conveniences of the present day. In connection with the centenary celebrations of His Grace's death anniversary which is to take place in 1955 we hope to do the consecration service of the new would be reconstructed church. On that occasion we have an idea to publish his life history. Now, when various faiths are confronting the church, may his example inspire each one of us. It is most fitting that this Jubilee conference is conducted in the premises of the resting place of the relics of this holy man.

History of the Syrian Christian Congress.

This congress was started with the name 'Maha Jena Sabha' by His Grace Pulikot Mar Dionysius Metropolitan, Vattaseril Malpan, Varughese Mappillai and E. M. Philipose. In the beginning it

was an association of those who knew English. Somewhere near the beginning itself, it was converted into an association of all the Syrian Christians and not only those who knew English. In 1902 when this association was reformed Pulikottu Mar Dionysius was the patron and the diocesan bishops sub-patrons, and very Rev. Remban Vattaseril Gevarughese was the president. The anniversary meeting of the association in 1907 in the Old Seminary was a very grand function. It was in this meeting that Rev. Fr. P. T. Gevarughese, M. A. was awarded a medal. In the anniversary meeting held in 1909 at Kunnamkulam Mr. E. M. Philipose was honoured with a decoration.

Following the visit of Patriarch Mar Abdulla there arose disputes in the church and so the activities of the association gradually came to a stand still. Later in 1930 the association was reorganised and it continued for some time. Again in the month of November 1949 on the Parumala festival day it was re-established in the name of Malankara Syrian Christian Congress. After this the Congress is working very vigorously. The Syrian Church is fortunate enough to get the great orator *Mr. P. Jacob Kurien as president and Mr. George Vallakalil, B. A., B. L. as the secretary of the congress. The congress took up the responsibility to give a grand tea-party to all the patients of the Nuranad leprosy hospital on

*Mr. Jacob Kurien is dead and in his place Dr. C. T. Eapen M. A., B. Sc., Ph. D. has been elected as President.

the last Christmas day. It has also made arrangements to see to the religious needs of the Syrian patients and is giving them clothes, foot-wears etc. Such deeds are really praiseworthy and deserve encouragement.

Sense of duty of Christians.

It is true that the congress has no political interest or programme. The broad minded authorities of today are trying to develop India into a country that can tolerate all the religions. But we know that a good many people are aiming to change India into a purely Hindu country. So the Christians who form a minority here should behave cautiously and intelligently. It is the duty of the Malankara Christians to lead the Indian Christians in this matter. We want the friendship of the community which form the majority here. We do not intend to be at variance with them.

We should attempt to raise our sense of duty and thus revive their sense of justice. In this connection, I wish to put in a word about the difficulty in the construction of churches. The right of a citizen to profess, practise and propagate any religion he likes, is the basic principle of the Indian Constitution. In the light of this right we ought to examine the justice of the laws of the Travancore-Cochin Government in preventing the construction of churches. Leaving aside the justice part of it, even if we consider the religious aspect, how can

any one oppose the construction of new buildings to worship God? How can it offend any one? What ever the case of cemeteries be, no one can oppose the building of churches. The matter has to be consulted with the leaders of other communities who have got sense of justice. We hope the Syrian Congress will give a good and appropriate lead in all these matters.

CHAPTER 14

MESSAGES TO THE CONGRESS.

The following are some of the messages received by the author in the capacity of the Reception committee President of the Syrian Christian Congress Jubilee Celebrations.

H. G. The Arch Bishop of Canterbury, London:-

With deep satisfaction I have heard that the Jubilee meeting of the Malankara Syrian Christian Congress will be held in the parish church at Cheppad on May 14th. It is particularly appropriate that in this 50th year of the Congress its members will assemble with the hope that an end may be put to the disputes which have troubled and divided the Orthodox Syrian Church. There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. It is of particular importance that Christians of all



His Excellency Dr. Ato Emmanuel Abraham.
The Ethiopian Ambassador in India.

traditions should stand together, and I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my satisfaction at the bonds of brotherly christian sympathy which bind together members of the Syrian Orthodox and Anglican traditions.

I pray Almighty God to bless your Congress and ever to pour upon your church the riches of His Grace, both in its own ecclesiastical life and in its spiritual labours on behalf of the people of India. (Geoffrey Cantuar.)

Rt. Rev. Theophilos, Bishop of Harar, Ethiopia:-

I am glad to hear of the forthcoming inauguration of the Malankara Syrian Christian Congress Jubilee meeting. I take this opportunity to express my sincere good wishes for its success. (Theophilos.)

Private Secretary to H. M. the King of England, Buckingham Palace, London:-

The Private Secretary begs to acknowledge Dr. Daniel's letter of March 23rd, which has been laid before the King. His Majesty was interested to hear of the celebrations to be held in the parish church at Cheppad, but regrets that he cannot, in accordance with his rule in such matters, send a special message for this occasion.

H. E. The Ethiopian Ambassador in India:-

I thank you for your letter of the 26th April last. On the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations

of the Syrian Christian Congress commencing on the 14th May 1950, I would request you to convey to H. H. the Catholicos, the Bishops and all the members of the congress the greetings and best wishes of the people of Ethiopia and of myself, and our sincere hope that the richest blessings of our Great God and of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the hope of the world will rest on your church and congress.

I greatly regret my inability to be in your midst on this great occasion, as I had hoped earlier, and to convey to you personally the greetings of your fellow Christians in Ethiopia whose ancestors received the blessed Gospel of Love about the same time as your forefathers did. I trust, however, to be enabled to visit you and your ancient churches in the near future.

(Emmanuel Abraham.)

H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece:-

The historical and cultural links between the Greek and Syrian Churches are ancient and binding - inspite of past dogmatic differences and controversies.

For this reason, now that so many new dangers threaten the Christian World, it is time for us to strive to heal such outmoded, inherited estrangements, and to once again draw closer as before division set in, for the glory of God and His Kingdom on earth. While sincerely

praying for this, I present the Syrian Christian Congress with my congratulations for its Jubilee and with my best wishes for the good work that it is doing.

(Peter.)

H. E. the Governor of Bombay:-

I wish all success to the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Malankara Syrian Christian Congress and I am glad to know that His Excellency the Ethiopian Ambassador will inaugurate the celebrations. In Father Daniel the Syrian Christians have a learned and sympathetic pastor with whom I have had the pleasure of corresponding. I hope and pray that the union between the two branches of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India will speedily be achieved.

(Maha Raj Singh.)

Hon. Minister for Health, Govt. of India:-

I have much pleasure in wishing every success to the 50th annual session of the Syrian Christian Congress. The Syrian Christian community is a fine community and can count amongst its members many men and women who have rendered and continue to render useful service to India. As I have so often said, India is a dry land thirsting for the refreshing waters of single-eyed and devoted service. To the followers of Him whose life was one untiring mission of service to humanity and who finally laid down his life so that others might live,

service without thought of personal gain, service that counts not the cost, service that radiates love, service that is one perpetual quest for Truth and self-realisation should come naturally.

I sincerely trust that the Syrian Christian community will live up to the high ideals for which the Lord Jesus lived and died and that its members will give a lead in these difficult times so that we may all rise above the man-made barriers of caste, creed and class and find our true freedom in perfect service and through that perfect love which casteth out fear.

(Amirt Kaur.)

Hon. Finance Minister, Govt. of India:-

I hope the forthcoming Syrian Christian Congress will be a success and will help to revive the traditions which the Syrian Church has upheld through the centuries. Through all my varied experience in the official and public life of the country there is nothing that has impressed me more than the need for strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of the country. The Syrian Church has a valuable contribution to make in the present troubled times. It is my earnest wish that your efforts in this direction would bear abundant fruit.

(John Mathai.)



His Holiness Anba Youssab II.
Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt.

Hon. General Secretary, Phil. Society, London:-

Thank you for your letter of the 18th April and I am interested to hear of the forthcoming 50th anniversary celebrations of the Syrian Christian Congress, which will be held at the ancient parish church at Cheppad, on May 14th. On behalf of the Philosophical Society of England I am pleased to send you a message of good will and to wish you, your church, and the Congress God speed in the fine work which you are doing. (Charles Wye.)

CHAPTER 15

ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN COMMUNION WITH MALABAR CHURCH.

In the east there are some churches which are neither Greek Orthodox nor Roman Catholic nor Western Protestant. These are churches with their own distinct traditions and with an entirely independent ecclesiastical status, founded directly by the apostles or by their immediate disciples. They are:- 1) The Syrian Church of Antioch, the inheritor of the church of Antioch where the followers of Jesus were called for the first time Christians (Acts 11 [26]). 2) The Egyptian or Coptic Church, possessors of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the first centre of Christian higher studies. 3) The Ethiopian Church, the sole church in Africa having the support of a

Christian Kingdom. 4) The Armenian Church. 5) The Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar, the mother church of India. These are in communion with one another.

This group of ancient churches being unable to accept the council of Chalcedon held in 451 decided to remain faithful to the older and simpler tradition of the universal church. They are the only existing group of churches in Christendom which, inspite of having entirely different traditions both in liturgy, administration and inspite of their strongly ethnical character which was imposed upon them by their surroundings still preserve the most outstanding characteristics of the church universal. They still preserve that noble practice of the early church that the barriers of language, race and colour, and even the differences in church traditions are not obstacles to intercommunion, which is the only true sign of Christian unity.

The Syrian Church of Antioch.

Till the sixth century the seat of the Antiochene Patriarch was Antioch. Since the twelfth century Patriarch Mar Michael has changed his seat to the Safran Dayara in Mardin. After the year 1924 the seat of Patriarch is Homs. The present Patriarch H. H. Ignatius Aprem Severius resides in Homs in Syria. He is a scholar and has written about twenty books.

There are twelve parishes in the vicinity of the Patriarchal church of Homs and ten thousand are the families belonging to those 12 parishes. For the Patriarchal church there are 800 families. Under the Patriarch there are eight Bishops. They are

1) Mar Athanasius Quasir Metropolitan of Mosul, Iraq.
2) Mar Thimotheos Thoma Arsiogli Metropolitan, Midiat, Kurdistan in Turkey.
3) Mar Osthathios Kuriakos Metropolitan, N. E. of Syria.
4) Mar Yuhanon Cleemes Metropolitan living with Patriarch.
5) Mar Ivanios Yuhanon Quandor, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Damascos dioceses.
6) Mar Kurilos Michael Metropolitan of Cairo diocese.
7) Mar Athanasius Abdesu Metropolitan of Jerusalem.
8) Mar Julius Elias, Delegate Metropolitan in Malabar.

Patriarchal Representatives:-

1) Very Rev. Kori Elias Silasi, Alleppo, Syria.
2) Very Rev. Yuhanon Dolabani in Safran Dayara, Mardin.
3) Very Rev. Remban Gibrayil, Istambul, Constantinople, Turkey.
4) Very Rev. Remban Yacoob Mosuli, Mar Mathai Dayara, Mosul, Iraq.

5) Rev. Kasiso Ephraim Alkari, Bagdad, Iraq.
6) Rev. Kasiso Musa Thoma, Basra, Iraq.
7) Rev. Kasiso Alias Sukar, New York, America.

The theological college which was conducted in the town of Sahalay in Lebanon is transferred to Mosul. It is called Apremia Theological college. Its Principal is very Rev. Remban Paulose. To help him there are thirteen professors. Free education is given in this theological college. There is an orphanage in Beirut and there are about 150 orphans living there. Their expense is met by the Syrians in America. There are seven parishes and about 50 thousand communicants in America for the Antiochene Syrian Church. In New Jersey there is a very beautiful Syrian church and about 400 families belonging to it.

CHAPTER 16

THE EGYPTIAN OR COPTIC CHURCH.

The Coptic Church was founded about 60 A. D. by St. Mark the Evangelist who was a native of Pentapolis an outlying province of Egypt on its extreme north west frontier, and who lived for a long time in Jerusalem with his mother during the time of our Saviour on earth.

St. Mark's first convert in Alexandria was St. Annianus, who was a shoe maker and he succeeded him as the first bishop of Alexandria.



Rev. Father Marcos Daoud.
(Coptic Priest)
Director of the Theological College, Addis Ababa.

Christianity flourished in Egypt very soon. One of the factors which helped in its wide-spread was the Theological school of Alexandria which was a great blessing not only to Egypt, but also to all the Christian World.

Christianity in Egypt, as else where, was persecuted from the beginning. The greatest persecution was during the reign of Diocletian, the Roman emperor, at the beginning of the fourth century. Historians say that the number of martyrs in Egypt during his reign was about 250,000. But all the persecutions led to more strength to the church. In a short time all the Egyptians became Christians. Historians say that at the time of Arab invasion the inhabitants of Egypt were all Christians which amounted to 30 millions. Since that time, the number of Christians began to decrease.

At the present time the whole population of Egypt is about 20 millions. Of these, only three millions are Christians. The majority of them belong to the Coptic Church. There are few Roman Catholics and few Protestants. Besides Egypt there are other countries which are affiliated to the See of St. Mark ie. Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. In Palestine there is a big Egyptian community who built various Coptic Churches there. At the request of the natives of South Africa and Nigeria a bishop was consecrated for them recently.

The present Coptic Patriarch H. H. Anba Yousab II is very efficient and pious. Under him

the Church is thriving well. The number of bishops at home and abroad is as follows:- Four in Lower Egypt, thirteen in Upper Egypt, four in the big monasteries as heads of them, one in Jerusalem, two in Sudan, one in South Africa and one in Ethiopia. The present prelate in Ethiopia will be the last Egyptian prelate and his place will be filled by Ethiopian prelate after his death. The residence of the Coptic Patriarch is always in Cairo. But during the summer he goes for about two or three months to Alexandria on the sea shore.

As was the usual practice for the Coptic Church to help other churches by learned preachers the Ethiopian Church has been given the services of Rev. Fr. Marcos Daoud. He is a very learned and pious Coptic priest who is the Director of the Theological college at Addis Ababa. No doubt his guidance will be very beneficial to the progress of the college.

The following is a letter to the author from the Private Secretary to H. H. the Coptic Patriarch. It shows well the relationship between the Syrian and Coptic Churches.

Cairo,
30th. Sept. 1948.

Dear Father Daniel,

I am authorised by H. H. the Patriarch to send you this letter. It is with great pleasure that I received your letter in which you refer to the old

relationship between the Syrian Church in Malabar and the Church of Alexandria. It is true that Patriarch Demetrius XII sent the learned man Pantaneus to India in 190 A. D. This messenger was the head of the clerical school in Alexandria and was replaced later on by Clement. Pantaneus went to India where he preached the message of salvation and on his way he passed by Yemen the Arab region where he found the gospel of St. Mathew written in Hebrew handwriting. He brought the copy back to Alexandria where he died in 202 A. D.

You undoubtedly know that the Syrian Church backed the Coptic Church in the council of Chalcedon which met in 451 by the order of Markianos the Roman Emperor and his wife Polikharia. The bishops in that council meant to change the belief of the church in the divine Incarnation which affirms one Nature incarnated in God the Word. Such a belief is consistent with the divine inspiration which says 'The Word became flesh.'

Patriarch Discorus XXV clung tenaciously to this divine text because his master Cyril the Alexandrian and his predecessor Athanasius the Great affirmed it as also it has been affirmed by all the Patriarchs assisted with all Heads of the church in the East. The Syrian Church of Antioch and the Church of Alexandria endured bitter persecutions by the emperors for their firm attitude towards the holy Orthodox belief. One of the great Syrian Patriarchs Sawaris of Antioch was sent out of his See and exiled

to remote countries. He fled first to Egypt where he was welcomed by the Coptic Church and incorporated his name in the list of saints as shown in our prayer book and in the memoirs of saints.

It is worth mentioning here that Bishop Jacob the disciple of Sawaris the Patriarch of Antioch carried out, after the exile of his master, his ideas and teachings in Syria. The Coptic Church will never forget the services of the bishop. He gave to every child baptised by him the name of Discorus as an appreciation of what his master endured in his exile under the terrible persecution for his firm attitude towards the belief of the fathers of the church. With all Christian love and fellowship,

Yours in His service,
Guirgis Ibrahim
Head of St. Mark Cathedral, Cairo.

CHAPTER 17

THE ETHIOPIAN CHURCH.

The belief in the Word of God accepting the Old Testament dates back to about the year 980 B. C. in Ethiopia; that is during the reign of Solomon in Palestine. Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia early in the Christian era, much earlier than in Europe, when Candace, the 5th ruler after Bazin, an Ethiopian, went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On his way back he met Philip the apostle, as it is given



His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I.
The Emperor of Ethiopia.

in the book of Acts. Candace was therefrom converted to Christianity and was therefore baptised.

Christianity commenced at that early date in Ethiopia inspite of the fact that Holy communion and baptism were practised in the country as from the time of the Kings Abraha and Atsbaha, who as brothers, were jointly ruling as Kings of Ethiopia in 290 A. D. All the Kings who reigned in Ethiopia have been Christian from that date. At that time a certain foreigner called Frumentius came to Ethiopia as a visitor and stayed there for a long period becoming an Ethiopian subject. He preached Christianity in the court of the two kings named above, and acquainted them of the need of having a bishop from abroad. These kings therefore commissioned Frumentius to go to Egypt for the purpose and, as a result, he was made the first bishop for Ethiopia to teach Christianity officially as it was accepted in Alexandria. Frumentius received the title of Casate-Birhan Salama, meaning the Revealer of light. He consecrated bishops to assist him in the organisation of Christianity in the empire. Since the time of the Christianisation of Ethiopia to the Orthodox Christian religion the head-quarters of the Church was in Aksum, the capital of the kingdom. Churches were built all over the country extending from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean.

The Christian Kings have assisted the church in the building and maintenance of the edifice, in assigning special lands for maintenance of the clergy

and in aiding the clergy in the teaching. About 1515 A. D. during the reign of Libna-Dingil, a Mohamedan known as Giragn invaded the country and burnt churches and scripture and persecuted the educated Ethiopian Christians. The persecutions were so thorough and widespread that literature and religious documents etc, were saved only by being hidden in caves and holes and some remain buried to this day. Since the accession of King Galaodeos after the defeat of Giragn, the empire was reorganised and the Church re-established. It was not until the Italian invasion of 1935 that the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches were again subjected to persecution.

A few words might be appropriate as to the present organisation of Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian ecclesiastical council is responsible for religious education in the empire and receives the active support of His Imperial Majesty and of the Faithful. It has re-organised the Theological schools which are hoped to be established soon all over the country.

More over, the church, through its ecclesiastical council, is working harmoniously with the ministry of education so that the people receive not only general education but spiritual education as well. In view of the great importance of religious instruction in the school curriculum, Sunday schools as such have not been established since on every week day extensive religious instruction is furnished.

Since the middle of the 19th century, several foreign Christians sent their missionaries both from the Protestant and Catholic Churches. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church faithful to her religious rites and traditions has been and is still working hard to spread the Gospel of Christ and the Christian faith.

The existing connection of the Ethiopian Church with that of Alexandria is that the present Ethiopian bishops have been consecrated on the agreement that the existing *Coptic Arch Bishop for Ethiopia, who is resident in Egypt, would as long as he is alive retain his title, but after him, his place would be taken by an Ethiopian Arch Bishop with full power and independent authority to consecrate Bishops and in the mean time, his functions would be carried out by Bishop Basilios who is officially acting as the Head of the Ethiopian Church.

There are six Bishops in Ethiopia. They are:– 1) Bishop of Shoa (who is acting as the Head of the Ethiopian Church). 2) Bishop of Gonder. 3) Bishop of Harar. 4) Bishop of Dessie. 5) Bishop of Lekemti. 6) Bishop of Yirga-Alem.

The population of the empire of Ethiopia is estimated to be twelve to fifteen millions and out of this there are eight millions of Ethiopian Church Christians. In Addis Ababa, there is a Theological college as well as three other schools, and in the

*Coptic Arch Bishop for Ethiopia is dead and so H.G. Bishop Basilios who is very keen in church affairs has recently been made the Arch Bishop for Ethiopia.

various provinces there is a great number of church schools and there are thousands of monasteries and nunneries.

It is happy to note that the independent Ethiopian Church has got a very good future under the able leadership of its bishops. Rt. Rev. Theophilos, Bishop of Harar with whom the author is in correspondence is a very pious and able prelate with broad out look on life. Ethiopian Church was represented by him in the last World Council of Churches held at Amsterdam. He likes to have great connection with the Syrian Church as such connection will be good for both Churches.

His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, the Lion of Judaea & *Negus Negusti* (King of Kings) is the present Emperor of Ethiopia and is very much interested in church affairs as well as state affairs. He was born in 1892. He has read widely and is deeply learned in the literature of his country and possesses a full knowledge of the best European works on literary and scientific subjects. French and English are known to him well. He has a thorough knowledge of the Bible which he studies daily. 2nd November 1930 was the great day of his coronation.

The famous queen Makeda of Sheba in the Ethiopian royal family had a son Menelek from Solomon the wise, King of Israel. Thus the royal family has its descent from the Great King Solomon. The greatest effort which H. I. M. Haile Selassie makes is to educate the young people of



His Grace Right Rev. Theophilos
Bishop of Harar, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia. Tens of schools are instituted every year. This year the University is begun. Hundreds of students are now having their higher studies in Europe, America, Beirut and Egypt. On account of the great interest in educating the Ethiopians, His Imperial Majesty has himself specially taken charge of the ministry of education which has got the greatest budget.

The Syrian Church of Malabar is very much indebted to His Imperial Majesty for having taken some of her sons in the staff of the Ethiopian education service and thereby maintaining a mutual relationship between the two Churches. His Imperial Majesty is a man of prayer. It was due to his deep prayers that he returned to his country after the Italian invasion which began in 1936 and ended on 5th May 1941. He begins every important work with prayer. When ever he goes out for visits he prays in the Addis Ababa Cathedral before starting and on his return also he does the same thing. He believes that through religion the redemption of his country should come. Every Sunday and holy day he attends church without fail. His Majesty and the royal family are universally loved and respected. It was by the untiring efforts of His Imperial Majesty that he won autonomy for his Church without a break with the Coptic Patriarch. In this respect Ethiopia has set an example to the Syrian Church of Malabar which is also striving for internal autonomy. Let the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch in the name of

God and his church imitate the Coptic Church. The Holy Apostolic Eastern Churches look to the great Christian Monarch to work for the restoration of the unity of the Eastern Christendom.

Her Imperial Majesty the Queen Itegne Menen is equally pious and interested in the education of the youth. Through her initiative a great number of Girls' schools, Nurses' schools and Art schools have come into existence. When Ethiopia had been invaded in 1936 she had made the vow to present her crown set with precious diamonds to the Holy Sepulchre if she and her beloved husband regained their throne. She redeemed her promise soon after the liberation.

His Excellency Dr. Ato Emmanuel Abraham is the Ethiopian Ambassador to India. He is deeply religious and has much faith in God and His guidance. His loyal and faithful services have made him the man that he is today. His Excellency is a devout Christian and is of immense service not only to his own country but also to the world at large.

Some time ago Mr. K. O. Koshy, B. A., L. T., a Director in the Ethiopian Education Service was invited to the Cheppad P. M. D. English Middle School of which the author is the Manager, for a speech about Ethiopia. There was a good audience in the school and all were very much impressed with the speech in which he said about the paternal care His Imperial Majesty takes in the uplift of the people and the Church.

The Theological College in Ethiopia has got about 180 students. Its Director is Rev. Marcos Daoud, a very learned and efficient priest of the Coptic Church. The students are admitted while they are very young and even elementary training is given at the college, the course taking about seven to nine years. There is a scheme to begin one or two more colleges of the same type in different parts of the country and later to establish a proper Theological College as a faculty of the University started there. The leaders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church are aware of the fact that the Africans, particularly the Christians, are looking up to them for leadership because of the fact that there is an independent ancient indigenous Church with a Christian Monarch who is free, and one can justifiably expect history to be made there.

CHAPTER 18

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.

The land of Ararat or Armenia being a neighbour country of the Holy land was one of the first countries where Christianity was introduced by the Apostles of Christ. King Abgar who was a contemporary of our Lord Jesus Christ, was suffering from an incurable ailment. Hearing of Christ's miraculous healing power and hostile attitude of the Jews towards Him, Abgar sent messengers to our Lord

inviting Him to Armenia in order to cure him and stay in that country as a royal guest out of reach of His enemies. Jesus replied that He could not go, but He would send his disciples to cure him. Accordingly two apostles of Christ St.Thaddaeus and St.Bartholomew visited Armenia Minor, healed the Armenian King Abgar at Edessa from his ailment and preached the Gospel there. This is the reason for it some times being called the Armenian Apostolic Church. But the correct name is Armenian Church or the Church of Armenia. A more familiar example of the Church being known by the name of its country is the Anglican Church which is called the Church of England. The Armenian Church is a true branch of the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic (universal) Church of Christ.

It is said that the messengers of King Abgar asked our Lord for a piece of cloth which he gave them to deliver to the King as a token. The messengers found that the cloth had taken a true image of Jesus. This cloth, known in the Armenian history as Dastarak, was kept for centuries in the tower of the principal gate of Edessa, but disappeared during Ottoman persecution. In the Armenian Church calendar King Abgar is mentioned as the first Christian King of Armenia.

The oldest Armenian Church in existence is Etchmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Catholicos or Supreme Patriarch. Etchmiadzin, of which the literal translation is 'The only begotten descended,'



His Holiness George VI
Catholicos (Supreme Head) of the Armenian Church, Armenia.

was erected between 261–301 A. D. by King Tiritades and St. Gregory the Illuminator. Built of granite from the adjacent Mount Ararat, the Cathedral has stood for the last sixteen centuries an architectural gem in the valley of Ararat near Erivan, the capital of the Armenian Republic. The following interesting story is recorded by Armenian historians in connection with the building of Etchmiadzin. After King Abgar Christianity had a set-back in Armenia, losing ground against the powerful priesthood of the heathen temple of Diana, Zeus etc. King Tiritades who was an ally of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (245–313) instituted a wide-spread persecution of the Christians in his own territory, believing that Christianity weakened the ties of nationality. Amongst the victims were forty Roman nuns of noble birth who had fled from the persecution of Diocletian and taken refuge in Armenia with their leaders Ripsime and Gaiane.

Ripsime is said to have been a Roman maiden of unsurpassed beauty, who after escaping the unwelcome attentions of the Roman Emperor, was to meet another royal admirer in the person of King Tiritades. The latter was so struck by her loveliness that he desired to have her as his wife. But she refused to break her vows by marriage with a heathen King and took to flight. She was, however overtaken by the royal guards together with her prioress Gaiane and all her companions, and they were all put to death. Soon after this, the King seized with intense

remorse and melancholy, became like a mad man. The Queen Ashghen and her sister-in-law Khosrovidooght were in despair. They called all the magi and priests to restore the King, but all their efforts were of no avail. Khosrovidooght then had a dream that the only person who could heal the King was Gregory the Parthian. Now this Gregory, who was to become later the Illuminator or the reviver of Christianity in Armenia had been condemned previously by Royal decree for having boldly advocated the cause of the Christian faith and thrown into the dungeon of Ashtishat to die of starvation.

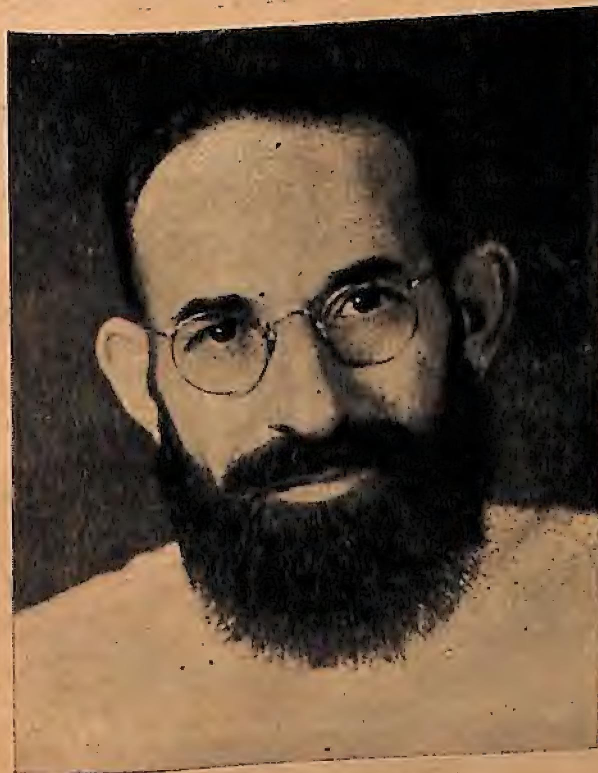
After the princess' dream, he was promptly released, and taken to the Royal palace, where he prayed, laid hands on the King and his reason was restored. On the same day King Tiritades with the Royal family and several thousand Armenians were baptised. Gregory then conceived the idea of erecting a suitable place of worship in the capital city of Vagharshapat, and according to tradition he saw in a vision the Son of God descend and knock with a wand at the exact spot where the Great Church of Armenia was to be built. He informed the King of the vision, and by Royal order huge granite stones were brought from the nearby mount Ararat to Vagharshapat for the erection of Etchmiadzin. The enthusiasm was so great that even the King himself and the Royal ladies assisted in the building by carrying stones and earth.

Since the day of the foundation the church was named Etchmiadzin after St. Gregory's vision. Simultaneously with Etchmiadzin, two other beautiful churches were also built in the neighbourhood, dedicated to the Roman Virgin martyrs Ripsime and Gaiane and their companions, who were placed on the Church calendar as saints. These two churches similarly built of granite, stand to this day together with Etchmiadzin as monuments of early Christainity in Armenia and of its noble architecture. With the royal aid Gregory extended the work of conversion throughout Armenia and adjacent Georgia, reconsecrating heathen temples into Christian Churches and heathen priests into monks and bishops.

In the year 404 A. D. two men of genius, St. Sahag the Catholicos of Armenia and St. Mesrob Vardapiet invented the Armenian alphabet and translated the Holy Bible from Greek to Armenian. This classic Armenian Grabar translation is recognised by scholars as the 'queen of all translations'. The Church of Armenia has been the centre of Armenian culture. The development and conservation of the culture is principally due to the efforts of the Church. Armenian literature was started with the translation of the Bible at the beginning of the fifth century which later came to be known as the Golden age of Armenian culture.

The present Armenian population is about two millions in the homeland and one and a half millions scattered all over the world. The present

Catholicos of all Armenians is H. H. George VI (Gevorgios). He was born in 1869. Having passed the Gevorgian college he attended the University of Leipzig in Germany and successfully passed the degree in Philosophy and Theology. For many years he was teaching in Armenia. In June 1913 he was ordained as Vardapiet (monk) and consecrated Bishop in 1917. On 22nd June 1945 he was elected Catholicos and installed as such on the 24th. He is a scholar and he spares no pains for the protection, progress, spiritual and intellectual advancement of the Armenian nation. The Armenians are as a rule religious and the love for their Church is traditional. Where-ever they settle down in groups or communities their first thought is the erection of a church. Besides the churches in Armenia, Syria and Palestine there are today a great number of churches throughout the world where Armenian communities are found. Russia, Georgia, Turkey and the Balkans contain many magnificent Armenian Churches. There are Armenian Churches in London, Manchester, Paris, Marseilles, New York, Los Angeles, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Alexandria, Cairo, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Dacca, Chinsura, Saidabad, Rangoon, Batavia, Sourabaya and the beautiful church in Singapore built by the well known architect Coleman in Hill Street in 1835. Vicar of the Armenian Church at Calcutta is Rev. Fr. A. Edgarian. He is a very learned and pious priest with whom the author is acquainted by correspondence.



Rev. Father A. Edgarian.
Vicar, Armenian Church, Calcutta.

The Church of Armenia accepts the first three ecumenical councils (universal councils of the Christian Church, namely the Council of Nicea in the year 325 A.D., the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. and the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.). The Nicene Creed formulated at the first of these Councils is sung as a part of the Mass every Sunday in the Armenian Church. Christ is believed to be perfect man and perfect God in the same time and therefore the Armenian Church condemns the heresies of Eutyches, Arius, Nestorius and Machedon. It also rejects the Diophysite (two natures) teachings of the Council of Chalcedon held in 451 A. D. Armenian Church accepts all the seven Sacraments. Baptism and Confirmation are performed together during the first forty days following birth. The Orders in the Armenian Church are Acolytes, Deacons, Priests and Bishops. There are married priests and celibate priests. Married priests are the pastors and ministers in the parishes. The celibate Vardapiets are Preachers of the Gospel and Doctors of the Church. They may also be ordained Bishops.

The Bishops and Arch Bishops are the princes of the Church with authority from the apostles to ordain Deacons, Priests and Vardapiets and to bless and consecrate churches. They are the heads of the dioceses representing the Catholicos under whose jurisdiction they are. The Bishops are elected by the delegates of the dioceses in convention and are approved and consecrated by the Catholicos

as Bishops or Primates of the dioceses. Next to the seat of Catholicos there are two Patriarchates, that of Jerusalem and of Constantinople. They both bear allegiance to the Catholicos in Etchmiadzin. Strict discipline is observed in the monasteries as well as in the dioceses all over the world. Whereas it is comparatively easy to attain priesthood, it is extremely difficult to attain the exalted order of bishop. The Armenian bishops who are usually of mature age are generally great Doctors of Theology and are excellent speakers.

According to Armenian historical records a number of churches in Jerusalem have been built by the contributions of Armenian Kings and Queens. The Armenian Convent of St. James on Mount Olives dates back to the fifth century. In all shrines of the Holy land, including the Holy Sepulchre, the Armenian Church has since time immemorial enjoyed equal privileges and rights with the Roman and Greek Churches to hold services by turns.

The Catholicos has the singular authority to consecrate bishops and bless the Chrism (holy oil). According to the constitution of the Church the parish or congregation elects a candidate for priesthood. After examination the bishop approves and ordains him. A newly ordained priest must serve five years in one parish before being transferred to another parish. He is required to believe in the doctrine, canons and discipline of the Church, confess the Nicene Creed, accept the teachings of the Holy

Fathers of the Church, reject the false teachings of the heretics, obey the rules and regulations of the Armenian Church and serve under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Diocese. The Armenian Church has been the Torch bearer of Christian civilization in the Middle East during the long and dark ages. Armenians have suffered and been persecuted under the hands of the Persians, Arabs, Tartars, and Turks for their Christian faith. They have remained faithful to Christ and have found their salvation in their Christian religion and they have given many martyrs and saints to the Christian Church.

APPENDICES.

1 THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. It aims at bringing the different denominations of the Christian Church together and helping them for closer contacts by studying each other's points of views and learning first hand the faith and practices of each section. There will be no interference in the internal affairs of any Church on matters of Faith, Order, Discipline etc. It works on the ideal not to widen the gap between Churches, but to make as much unity as possible. The Council co-operates with other organisations such as U. N. O. etc. which exist for purposes of preserving and promoting peace. Even though the Council's activities are ignorantly suspected at some Christian centres, the Council neither attempts to form a new Creed nor attempts to convert members of one denomination to another. The recent visits of the Bishop of Chichester Dr. G. K. A. Bell the Vice-President of the Council, Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft the General Secretary, Rev. Fr. Oliver S. Tomkins one of the Chief Asst. Secretaries and Dr. H. Kraemer the Director to Malabar have considerably helped to clear the mistaken impressions and to bring people in closer relations with the Council. They visited many centres of Malankara Church and had interviews with the Bishops in Malabar.

The Council was organised in 1938. It is expected that the youth may be got into its fold and stimulated the spirit of union in their minds. Many constructive schemes are being adopted by it. First and foremost of them is the meeting together of thoughtful and active members to exchange their views and ideas to see what the Bible has got to answer for the present political, economical and other complicated problems and to work for the spiritual co-operation in all Churches and to find out ways and means in solving the refugee problem. In general the Council is serving in various spheres.

The Council met at Geneva in Switzerland in 1946 and founded the Ecumenical Institute which has its Headquarters in Bossay (near Geneva). The most generous American millionaire Mr. Rockfeller has financed for the expenses of the Institute. Amidst the pressure of varying circumstances Dr. Visser't Hooft is ably managing the Institute interests. Dr. H. Kraemer is a skilful person who is working as the Director of the Institute. The Council is aiming at to see that the Ecumenical Institute is made an International Institution. The Institute serves for closer intercourse between the various countries and Churches. The Council had its first assembly at Amsterdam from Aug. 22nd to Sept. 4th 1948, with the representatives of 147 Churches from 44 countries. From the several Churches there were 351 delegates who took part in it.

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church was represented in the Amsterdam assembly by H. G. Mar Theodosius Metropolitan of Quilon Diocese, Rev. Fr. K. Philipose B. A., and Rev. Dn. K. M. Simon M. A., D. D. On this occasion there was the chance for the few members of the Minor Eastern Churches represented there to meet together at a dinner party given by His Grace Abuna Theophilos of the Ethiopian Church. Besides the Abuna, others in the group were Blatta Marsae Hazan Woldekirkos of the Ethiopian Church, Orthodox Syrian representatives and Fr. Shnok Kaloustain of the Armenian Orthodox Church (then Vicar of London Church and now Vicar General of the Armenian Diocese, U. S. A.). Only these few were the delegates who represented the 15½ millions of Minor Eastern Churches Christians (Ethiopians 8 millions, Armenians 4 millions, Copts 2 millions, Syrian Orthodox in India the Middle East and the Americas about 1½ to 2 millions).

It is quite welcome to learn that the next Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches and the next assembly of the World Christian Youth Conference are proposed to be held in December 1952 at Kottayam in Travancore, S India and that Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon is elected as the Organising Secretary. May God further and strengthen the common efforts for unity in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, according to the words of our Lord in His prayer to God "that they may be one as We are one".

2. CHRONOLOGY OF MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN *METROPOLITANS.

		From	To
St. Thomas	A. D.	52	72
Prelates of Sankarapuri & Pakalomatom families	....	52	345
Mar Joseph of Edessa who came with Thomas of Cana	....	345	
Pakalomatom Arch Deacons & Babylonian Bishops	....	345	1597
Arch Deacon George (Ghevarughese of Pakalomatom)	....	1597	1637
Arch Deacon Thomas who afterwards became Mar Thoma I	....	1637	1670
Mar Thoma II	....	1670	1686
Mar Thoma III	....	1686	1688
Mar Thoma IV	....	1688	1728
Mar Thoma V	....	1728	1765
Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I)	....	1765	1808
Mar Thoma VII	....	1808	1809
Mar Thoma VIII	....	1809	1816
Mar Thoma IX	....	1816	
Mar Dionysius II (Pulikott)	....	1815	1816
Mar Dionysius III (Punnathra)	....	1817	1825
Mar Dionysius IV (Cheppad)	....	1825	1855
Mar Mathews Athanasius (Palakunnathu)	...	1844	1877
Mar Dionysius V (Pulikott)		1865	1909
Mar Dionysius VI (Vattaseril)	....	1909	1934
H. H. Moran Mar Baselius, Catholicos of the East & Metropolitan of Malankara		1934	....

* These are only the names of the chief Metropolitans with authority over the whole Malankara Church.